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РАЗВЕДШКОЛА № 005

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ИСТОРИЯ ПАРТИЗАНСКОГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ



Abstract

The author of the book, based on personal experience, talks about little-known episodes of the Great Patriotic War - the actions of the Central Headquarters of the reconnaissance and movement on the southern flank of the Stalingrad Front sabotage groups of the partisan in 1942. At the same time, he did not limit himself to memories of the raid of only one of his groups, but analyzed the practice of such actions in general.

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Pyatnitsky Vladimir Iosifovich
Intelligence School No. 005

From the author

The idea to write memoirs about the Astrakhan sabotage and reconnaissance school of the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (TSSHPD) came to me as a result of persistent requests from friends who did not take seriously my stories about Soviet saboteurs operating in the German rear during the Great Patriotic War. Each person,

approaching the end of his life path, recalls some special period of his life, which left a more noticeable imprint on him than the rest.

The Patriotic War was the greatest catastrophe that the Soviet people ever had to endure. I had to take part in it as a 17-year-old boy and in extraordinary conditions. In September 1942, when I was studying at the regimental school of the 28th reserve rifle brigade of the Transcaucasian Front, I was seconded with a group of junior commanders to the Southern Department of the TsShPD, to staff the sabotage and reconnaissance school he had created. In this book, I try to fill a gap in history

Patriotic War, talking about the defense of Astrakhan.

In the second half of the summer of 1942, the situation on the southern sector of the Soviet-German front became seriously complicated. The German Army Group "South" was divided into two groups: "A" and "B". The first was aimed at the Caucasian direction, the second - at Voronezh and Stalingrad. Between them was a "no man's land" - the Kalmyk and Sal steppes. Through it, a direct path was opened to the lower reaches of the Volga, to the city of Astrakhan, which became the supply base for the Caucasian and Stalingrad fronts. The way to Astrakhan ran through the capital of the Kalmyk Republic, the city of Elista. Both warring parties

simultaneously realized this. In my book, I try to restore in chronological order the situation that developed on the Astrakhan sector of the front and around it, linking this with the measures taken by the Soviet command to organize the defense of Astrakhan. And on

Against this background, I talk about the sabotage and reconnaissance special school No. 005, its staffing, training of cadets, the formation of sabotage and reconnaissance groups and their transfer to the territory of the Kalmyk and Salsky steppes occupied by the Germans, about the actions of these groups behind enemy

lines. Special School No. 005 was strictly classified, as evidenced by its number with two zeros. Therefore, nothing was ever said about her anywhere.

I am writing about the special difficulties of the work of our partisans and reconnaissance saboteurs in the steppe conditions. The Kalmyk steppe is as flat as a tabletop, completely bare, devoid of any vegetation, except for feather grass, wormwood, and tumbleweed. Under these conditions, a man on a horse scans the steppe for ten kilometers in a circle.

I am talking about the fight against the traitors to the Motherland, the Kalmyk, Cossack and Turkestan-Muslim legionnaires, whose detachments operated under the command of German officers. These military formations continuously combed the steppe, looking for our intelligence agents-saboteurs.

I am writing about the heroic struggle and death of my comrades-in-arms and entire groups that died while carrying out the task of command. The fate of many of them has not yet been found out.

The veracity of the facts presented in the book is supported by the materials of the Headquarters of the TsSHPD representative in the south of the country and the Kalmyk Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of

Bolsheviks, indicating the corresponding numbers of archival documents. The Soviet High Command attached particular importance to partisan operations and reconnaissance in the operational rear of the German army in the decisive sectors of the battle on the Volga. Therefore, my story, as a direct

participant in these events, I think, will be of interest to the reader. In addition, I pose in my book some questions that remain misunderstood by our public until now. For example, about whether it was possible to send insufficiently trained and inexperienced children of 17-18 years old to combat missions in the most difficult conditions, who, despite all their heroism, were easily destroyed by the enemy. Or about the opportunistic approach to

the exploits of the defenders of the Motherland, when, for example, soldiers who had repressed parents were not rewarded for their feats, subject to submission to the because the Supreme was Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army I.V. Stalin declared that "the children of the enemies of the people cannot be heroes!"

The history of the Patriotic War is the history of the youth generation of the 1930s and 1940s. The main goal of my book is to show that difficult, but heroic time, which now remains only in the memory of the representatives of this outgoing generation of winners.

Since during the war years we were forbidden to take an interest in what did not directly concern us, and even more so to make any notes, we have to be content only with what was preserved in our memory or managed to be gleaned from archival documents, from the stories of people whom I completely trusted. I

really wanted to somehow shade those moments that in one way or another contributed to the emergence of the very patriotism that some representatives of the current leadership of the country oppose in our time, referring to it only as "soviet". But it was precisely the patriotism of the Soviet people that ensured the victory of our people in the war against German Nazism. The truth is that the highest form of crime is the betrayal of one's past. This thesis will never get old! I hope that my book will arouse the interest of readers,

especially those who are seriously interested in the history of the Patriotic War, and that it will contribute to the patriotic education of the young generation of Great Russia.

Author

Chapter

1 Development of the partisan movement at the beginning of the Patriotic War. Creation of the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (TSSHPP)

The situation in the southern direction of the Soviet-German front.
Formation of the Astrakhan direction (July-September 1942)

In order to understand the essence of the material being presented, one should first give a few historical references regarding events about which the new generation probably knows little. The Patriotic War

of the Soviet people against the German invaders began on the night of June 21-22, 1941. From the very first days of the German army's invasion of our territory behind enemy lines, partisan detachments and underground resistance groups were created on the initiative of the party bodies and the NKVD bodies. But the first partisan groups and detachments were poorly armed, they did

not have enough weapons and the necessary equipment. After all, everything that was prepared in anticipation of an enemy attack on our country in the late 1920s and early 1930s: the command cadres of future partisan detachments, sabotage specialists, material supply bases, and so on, which ensured an effective fight in the rear of the expected enemy, the country's leadership in the second half of the 1930s declared the work of "enemies of the people". Secret bases (where weapons, ammunition, food, medicines were stored) were liquidated, trained personnel were mostly repressed. Withdrawn from libraries and destroyed those manuals on the partisan cause that were published before 1937

Stalin put forward a new directive - "beat the enemy on his territory, with a mighty blow, with little bloodshed." In pursuance of this instruction, a new military doctrine was urgently developed.

So, the country did not have a pre-prepared partisan organization by the beginning of World War II. Only on June 29, 1941, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, by a special directive, determined the program for the deployment of the partisan movement in the occupied territory. And almost a month later, on July 18, the Central Committee of the All-

Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks appealed to the Soviet people "to organize the struggle in the rear of the German troops." It said, in particular, "that in the war against fascist Germany, which had seized part of the Soviet territory, the struggle in the rear of the German army was of exceptional importance. The task is to create unbearable conditions for the German interventionists, to disorganize their communications, transport and military units themselves, to disrupt their activities, to destroy the invaders and their accomplices, to help in every possible way to create cavalry and foot partisan detachments, sabotage and extermination groups, to develop a network of

party underground organizations to direct all actions against the fascist invaders. In order to give this struggle in the rear of the German troops the widest scope and combat activity, it is necessary to take up this matter on the ground by the leaders of the republics, regional, district, party and Soviet organizations themselves, who must in the areas occupied by the Germans personally lead this cause, lead groups and detachments of selfless fighters who are already fighting to disorganize enemy troops.

From the very first days of the war, active combat operations of partisans were deployed in the rear of the German Army Group "Center" in Belarus on the railway lines Brest - Minsk - Orsha, Minsk - Osipovichy - Gomel, in the region of Polesie, Vitebsk, Polotsk, in the territory of Bryansk, Smolensk, Orel, Leningrad and Moscow regions. Then the partisan struggle unfolded in the rear of the enemy army group "South" in the regions of Kiev, Sumy, Chernigov and Kharkov regions, and as the Germans moved further south, more and more centers of resistance were created in the rear.

By the spring of 1942, the partisans began to pose a rather serious danger to the communications of the German army. Therefore, in order to decisively fight the partisans, the German command had to draw large forces into the already occupied areas. And for large-scale operations in areas where the partisan movement assumed menacing proportions, as in Belarus, the Bryansk region and some other areas, the Nazi command was forced to withdraw individual military units from the front. According to the German command, the partisan war pulled over more than 12 German divisions, one mountain rifle corps, 11 infantry and cavalry brigades [1] . The centralized leadership of partisan operations behind enemy

lines soon became apparent to the Wehrmacht command. During the preparation and conduct by the Germans in any areas of significant military operations, the actions of partisan formations immediately intensified there in order to disrupt the supply and communications between parts of the German army. These actions gradually became a heavy burden for the enemy.

A general assessment of the partisan war in the rear of the German army was given by the leadership of the armed forces of Nazi Germany itself. Thus, Colonel-General Franz Halder (1884–1972), Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, wrote in his diary at the beginning of July 1941: "It is necessary to wait whether Stalin's appeal, in which he called on "all working people for a people's war against us"[2] .

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Later, the doubts of General Halder were dispelled by the commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal Hans Günther von Kluge (1882–1944), who wrote in his diary on July 16, 1942 that the partisan movement in Russia had assumed such proportions that it inspires serious concern and calls for drastic action. That Stalin's order "to create unbearable conditions in the rear of the German army is not far from being fulfilled"[3] .

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Colonel-General of the German Army Lothar Rendulich admitted in his post-war essay on the analysis of the actions of the partisans during the Second World War that "in no other theater of operations was there such close interaction between the partisans and the regular army, as in Russian."

He is echoed by the head of military communications of the German Army Group Center, General G. Teske, who after the Second World War recalled: "The first battle that the

Wehrmacht lost was the battle against Soviet partisans in the winter of 1941-1942. Then followed further defeats in this struggle. Basically, they consisted in the fact that from the very beginning the initiative was with the partisans and remained with them until the end of the war. A certain experience of partisan struggle against foreign invaders

had already been accumulated during the Civil War. The terrorist regime implanted by the interventionists and the White Guards in the territories controlled by them aroused the resistance of a significant part of the population. As a result, a partisan movement spontaneously arose.

For the purposeful leadership of this movement, already in January 1918, the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (TSSHPO) was created under the Operations Department of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs. Later it was transformed into the Special Intelligence Branch of the Operations Department of the Field Headquarters of the Revolutionary Military Council of the RSFSR.

This body was engaged in the organization of partisan formations and directed their combat operations. At the end of 1918,

the experience of guerrilla warfare was generalized and developed in the first part of the Field Manual of the Red Army, in the section "Maneuverable warfare, guerrilla operations."

For the military-political leadership of the partisan movement under the Central Committee of the RKG (b), special party bodies were created: the Central Bureau, the Don, Siberian, and Far Eastern Bureaus. Through regional party committees, they managed the partisan insurrectionary movement and, admittedly, they did it very successfully. Later, front-line headquarters of the partisan movement were also created: Ukrainian, Belorussian, Donskoy, North Caucasian, Ural, Northern, Siberian, Far Eastern. Thanks to the actions of partisan detachments, entire districts of a number of provinces were liberated. In some places, even

partisan fronts arose, for example, Gomel-Chernigov, Kuban-Black Sea, Stavropol, Derbent, Altai, East Transbaikalia, Amur, Suchansky, Ussuri and others.

TsShPO created special schools where he trained demolition workers and other specialists for partisan detachments.

Attaching great importance to the strengthening of the resistance of the people of the German army and the disorganization of its rear, the USSR State Defense Committee (GKO) on May 30, 1942 decided to create the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (TSSHPD) at the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command (VGK) of the Red Army. It also included representatives of the General Staff of the Red Army and the NKVD. The secretary of the Central Committee of the Party of Belarus Panteleimon Kondratievich

Ponomarenko (1902–1984) was appointed head of the TsShPD. And in September 1942, Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks V.N. Malinin (documents Nos. 59 and 60). By the same decision, republican, regional and front headquarters of the partisan movement were created. Among them, Ukrainian - the leader T.A. Strokach, Belarusian (P.Z. Kalinin), Lithuanian (A.Yu. Snehkus), Latvian (A.K. Sirotis), Estonian (N.G. Korotkoy), Karelian-Finnish (S.Ya. Vershinin), Leningrad (M.N. Nikitin), Orlovsky (A.P. Matveev), Smolensky (D.M. Popov), Stavropol (M.A. Suslov), Crimean (V.G. Bulatov), etc. Unfortunately, the documents on the development of the partisan movement do not say anything about the Southern Department of the TsSHPD, about the Astrakhan direction. This makes my story especially relevant. On September 6, 1942, at the Military Council of the Kalinin Front, the headquarters of the partisan movement was created, which was instructed to create and manage the actions of partisan formations in the Kalinin (RSFSR), Vitebsk, Vileika regions (BSSR) and the Latvian SSR.

In October 1942, the headquarters of the partisan movement under the Military Council of the Western Front was placed at the disposal of the TsShPD for the operational leadership of the partisan movement in the Mogilev, Minsk, Baranovichi, Brest and Belostok regions of the BSSR. And the headquarters of the partisan movement under the Military Council of the Bryansk Front was entrusted with the leadership and coordination of the actions of partisan formations in the Gomel, Polotsk, Pinsk (BSSR), Sumy and Chernihiv regions (Ukrainian SSR).

On September 6, 1942, the GKO created the High Command of the Partisan Movement and appointed Marshal K.E. Voroshilov (1881–1969). Stalin had just removed him from the leadership of the Leningrad Front for gross mistakes with grave consequences in command of the troops, with a recommendation to use him in the future "in rear military work" (document No. 56). Such work for Voroshilov was the appointment of the Commander-in-Chief of the partisan movement. But in November 1942, Stalin forgave his comrade-in-arms, and he was again appointed as a representative of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, his position as Commander-in-Chief of the partisan movement was abolished in November 1943, and the TsShPD was again subordinated directly to the Headquarters of the Supreme High

Command[4] Importance for summarizing more than an annual experience in partisan struggle had the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (Stalin) dated September 5, 1942 "On the tasks of the partisan

movement" (document No. 73). Partisan formations, detachments and countless sabotage and reconnaissance groups inflicted significant damage on the enemy in supplying his troops. Partisan sabotage on communications took on such a serious scale that it began to affect the implementation of the operational plans of the Wehrmacht command, and also dispelled the hopes of the Nazi leadership to turn the occupied territories into a reliable source of raw materials, food and labor for Germany.

The main combat unit in the partisan movement was the detachment. Part of the partisan detachments were formed in the Soviet rear with their subsequent transfer beyond

the front line. Partisan struggle as a form of armed resistance had much in common with the fighting of regular troops. The partisan front, in fact, existed without flanks and rear, in conditions of constant enemy encirclement. And unlike the regular troops, he did not have a single organizational structure. Everything depended on the situation in which they had to operate, on the military experience of the commanding staff, on the available weapons and material equipment, and on the task assigned. The creation of the High Command,

TsSHPD and local headquarters of the partisan movement made it possible to significantly improve communication with

partisan formations and their leadership. There was also established not special sabotage and reconnaissance (partisan) schools for the training of organizers of the partisan movement, saboteurs, intelligence officers, demolition workers and radio operators. I know that by that time, four sabotage and reconnaissance schools had already been created and were functioning under the TsSHPD. Three of them were in Moscow and the Moscow region (Nos. 001, 002 and 003), another one in the Saratov region (No. 004).

At the beginning of 1942, the fourth, so-called "off-front" directorate, was created in the Central Office of the NKVD, which also began to create its own sabotage and reconnaissance schools, in which special personnel were trained to work behind enemy lines. Each study group of these schools consisted of 20-25 people. The head of the fourth department was Lieutenant of State Security Goryunov. At the same time, special sabotage and reconnaissance schools were created under the Main Intelligence Directorate (Intelligence Directorate) of the General Staff of the Red Army.

Gradually, the material and technical supply of partisan formations and special groups operating on enemy communications in his rear improved. Patriots of the Fatherland joined the partisan detachments voluntarily. This required great

courage from them. There was a policy in the German troops, according to which any partisan who was taken prisoner and refused to cooperate was subject to immediate execution. The organizational structure of the partisan formations and their numbers were different: from 15 to 500 people or more. There were partisan formations numbering up to several thousand fighters. This depended on many

circumstances, including the area of their operations. Special sabotage and reconnaissance groups usually had a strength of 15 to 40 people. In total, more than 6,500 participated in the partisan movement.

partisan detachments and sabotage and reconnaissance groups.

Summing up the successes of partisan operations in the Patriotic War, the head of the TsSHPD P.K. Ponomarenko wrote that Soviet partisans destroyed, wounded and captured

over 1 million 600 thousand soldiers and officers of the German army and its allies, as well as German officials, employees of military construction organizations, military railway workers, colonists. They also destroyed about three thousand railway trains, 1191 tanks, 476 aircraft, 890 various warehouses and storage facilities[5] . —

In the middle of 1942, the situation in the southern direction of the Soviet-German front became more and more tense every day.

In mid-July 1942, the German Army Group South under the command of Field Marshal Walter Reichenau (1884–1942) was divided into two parts. The Southern Group "A" was led by General Field Marshal Wilhelm von List (1880-1971), it set its sights on the Caucasus with the aim of capturing Baku and the Baku oil region. The Northern Army Group "B" was commanded by Field Marshal Fyodor von Bock (1880-1945), she rushed to Voronezh and Stalingrad.

The tank army of Colonel General Ewald von Kleist (1881-1954) captured the entire North Caucasus, but got stuck in the vicinity of Mozdok and south of

Nalchik. The 6th Army of Colonel-General Friedrich-Wilhelm von Paulus (1890–1957) launched an offensive in the Stalingrad direction, captured a bridgehead on the Kalach River, from which it broke through to the western outskirts of Stalingrad and, despite the extremely unfavorable situation for itself, surrounded the city from the north and the west. The assault on Stalingrad

began. And between the German army groups "A" and "B" there was a "no man's land" - the Kalmyk and Salsky steppes, through which a direct path opened to the lower reaches of the Volga and to the city of Astrakhan, which at that time became the main supply point for the North Caucasian and Stalingrad fronts. Both sides, ours and the Germans, realized this at the same

time. The way to Astrakhan ran through the capital of the Kalmyk Republic, the city of Elista. But our troops were not there. Two roads led to Elista, one - from the side of the Caucasian group of Germans passed through Voroshilovsk (now Stavropol) through the villages of Divnoye - Priyutnoye, the other - from the side of the Stalingrad group of the enemy passed through Salsk - Repairnoye. The advance of the Germans to Elista forced the command

Stalingrad Front to put forward from the 51st Army, which covered the left flank of the Stalingrad Front from the Salsky steppes, a combined military group to cover Elista. But due to lack of time, forces and means, it was not possible to create a strong defense of the city. On August 10, the Germans occupied the regional center of the Kalmyk Republic, the village of Priyutnoye, located 75 kilometers southwest of Elista. A day later, German tanks with motorized infantry approached Elista from the village of Divnoye. On August 12, Soviet troops left Elista, who retreated in the direction of Astrakhan and Stalingrad. The German command intended to use the

capture of Elista to attack Astrakhan. For this purpose, the Germans introduced the 16th SS motorized rifle division "Brown Bear" and [6] two divisions of the 6th Romanian Corps into the Elista area. The German division operated along the grader Elista - Astrakhan to the village of Khulhuta. And in the northern uluses (districts) of the republic - Katgenery, Sarpa, Small Derbe - Romanian units operated.

To the south in the Caspian steppes, covering the open flank of the Mozdok grouping, Colonel General E. von Kleist concentrated the African Corps of General Felmi, encrypted with the letter "P" and intended for a campaign against Iran and further to India. It consisted of units of all military branches. Including it included the 3rd Panzer Division, four battalions of 6-barreled rocket launchers, several special forces. In the city of Elista itself, a special unit was created to fight

partisans and sabotage and reconnaissance groups, headed by Colonel Wolf.

This grouping of Germans received the task of breaking through to Astrakhan along the Elista-Yashkul-Khulkhut road with the task of capturing Astrakhan and cutting off the center

of the USSR from Caucasian oil. The road to Astrakhan was open. In order to prevent the Germans from carrying out their plans and closing the hole that had formed in our defense, units of the Stalingrad Military District were advanced to the far borders of the city, reinforced by the reserves of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command (VGK) - the 34th Guards Division, the 152nd Separate Brigade, some others parts. Based on t

the recruitment of the 28th Army, whose headquarters was in the Astrakhan Kremlin, was

accelerated. In August 1942, she stopped the advance of the German-Romanian troops to Astrakhan in the area of the villages of Khulhuta - Yusta - Enotaevskaya station. But there was no solid front line there. On both sides there were strongholds in the areas of khotuns (villages), koshars (sheep sheds) and khunduks (wells). The front line on both sides was guarded by mobile groups and patrols. Astrakhan was

intensively preparing for defense. The Germans systematically bombed the city and port. Astrakhan was filled with troops. New military units were formed in the city. Some of them went to Stalingrad, others to the Caucasus. And in the occupied uluses of the

Kalmyk Republic, the Germans conducted intensified propaganda among the population with the aim of inciting ethnic hatred between Russians and Kalmyks, under the slogans of separating Kalmykia from Russia and creating a Great Kalmyk state from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea. The situation in the occupied

uluses of Kalmykia was very difficult. Even before the occupation of Rhea by German troops, bandit groups appeared in a number of its uluses, consisting mainly of deserters who had fled the army or were hiding from mobilization, as well as staunch opponents of Soviet power. These groups were engaged in robberies.

During the occupation, the number of these bandit groups increased, and their activity increased significantly. The Germans began to forcibly recruit people from the local population into them. This bandit formation was now in most cases led by German officers. They were used to carry out patrol service, protect the flanks, conduct reconnaissance, but mainly to fight Soviet partisans, scouts, and saboteurs. In the occupied Elista, the Germans established a military commandant's office, a city

government, police and security agencies (Gestapo). And to fight the partisans, they created a special mobile group, the basis of which was the 146th security regiment of internal troops. To help him, two regiments of Don Cossacks were allocated under the command

marching ataman SV. Pavlov, various formations of the Kuban, Terek and even Zaporozhye Cossacks, the Turkestan-Muslim Legion (three battalions) and four Kalmyk squadrons. The Kalmyk formations were commanded by the Sturmbannführer (major) of the SS troops Rudolf Werbe or, as he was more commonly called, Dr. Otto Doll.

Later, by the time Kalmykia was liberated from the Germans, the Kalmyk formations already comprised more than 20 squadrons, on their basis the Kalmyk cavalry corps was formed, consisting of four divisions (5 squadrons each). But this happened already in the middle of 1943. In addition to the Kalmyk units, the

600th Cossack division, consisting of three cavalry squadrons, three plastun (foot) companies, artillery and mortar batteries, operated in the Kalmyk and Sal steppes. The total number of this compound exceeded two thousand people. It was commanded by Major Kononov, who had escaped from the Red Army.

The military units of the rear of the German army on the sector of the Kalmykia front - the south of the Rostov-on-Don region were commanded by German Colonel Wolf.

Chapter

2 Creation of the southern department of the TsSHPD and, with it, a sabotage and reconnaissance (partisan) school No. 005

The situation in the southern direction of the Soviet-German front.
2nd half of September 1942

In this difficult situation, on July 30, 1942, the TsShPD decided to create a headquarters in the south of the country to manage subversive activities behind enemy lines, in the territories occupied by them, as well as a special sabotage and reconnaissance (partisan) school to train appropriate personnel.

To implement this decision, on September 16, representatives of the TsSHPD, General I.I., arrived in the city of Astrakhan. Ryzhikov, who previously led the partisan movement on the Kalinin Front, his deputy Chekist intelligence officer Major Shestakov and political worker Toritsin. At the same time, by decision of the Kalmyk regional committee of the CPSU (b), an operational group was created to lead the partisan movement and the activities of the party underground in the territory occupied by the enemy.

The areas of responsibility of the Southern Headquarters (department) of the TsSHPD were the Kalmyk and Salsky steppes, the regions of the Stalingrad and Rostov regions bordering them, the Stavropol Territory, but mainly the territory of the Kalmyk Republic. Here, I believe, one should recall the history of the creation of the Kalmyk Republic, since the events described took place mainly on its territory or were directly related to it.

The Kalmyk Autonomous Republic was formed in November 1920 from part of the territories of the Tsaritsyn, Astrakhan and Stavropol provinces, the Don and Terek regions with the center in the city of Elista. Soviet power was established on this territory as early as March 1918, but in the autumn most of it was occupied by troops.

General A.I. Denikin (1872-1947), after which a significant part of government workers moved to the camp of the Whites.

The leaders of the counter-revolutionary Kalmyk military government then advocated the creation of a Cossack Kalmykia from Astrakhan, Don and Stavropol Kalmyks. This agitation was successful among a significant part of the Kalmyk population. Its echoes also appeared during the Patriotic War, in 1941–43. This circumstance undoubtedly affected the political situation and the course of hostilities in the area. September 1942, General Ryzhikov, by his order, announced the creation of a sabotage and reconnaissance (partisan) special school, which received index No. 005g for training special

destination.

Astrakhan was chosen for its placement, which became the nearest front-line center. The number of variable composition of this special school was determined to be 300 cadets. By the same order, senior political instructor Alexei Mikhailovich Dobroserdov, former secretary of the Elista city committee of the CPSU (b), his deputies, instructors and teachers [7] was appointed head of special school No. 005 by the same order. In the shortest possible time, the Headquarters were created in Astrakhan

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partisan movement in the south of the country and with it a special school number 005.

I have already said above that the organization of the partisan movement and sabotage and reconnaissance operations behind enemy lines from the very beginning felt an acute shortage of specialists, primarily radio operators, demolition miners and scouts. And the leadership of the partisan detachments and special sabotage and reconnaissance groups had to have at least a minimum of special knowledge. It was to fill this gap that a special school was created in Astrakhan. Her duties included training command and political personnel and specialists, which were mentioned above, for the occupied regions of the south of the country, primarily in the Astrakhan direction. In the event of a further enemy, it was planned to lay down secret bases of food and combat equipment for future partisan detachments and sabotage groups in areas of the Kalmyk steppe that had not yet been captured by the enemy, in

promotion

Volga regions of the lower reaches of the Volga and even in the Dagestan Autonomous

Republic. Cadets of the Astrakhan Special School No. 005 mastered domestic and captured weapons, mining methods, preparation of all kinds of land mines from improvised materials, studied the tactics of sabotage and work in conditions of complete separation from the supply bases and independence in decision-making, as well as actions in the bare steppe. At first, 40 fighters of the Elista fighter detachment were transferred to the Astrakhan special school. The further formation of the school was carried out mainly at the expense of the Komsomol members of Astrakhan, who, due to their youth or for some other reason, had not yet been drafted into the army, as well as at the expense of people evacuated from the Kalmyk uluses. It was mostly untrained and unfired youth aged 17-19. The contingent at the school was

selected heterogeneous. With such a recruiting system, people came across different. There were also volunteers. It is difficult to say what led them - ambition, romance or a thirst for achievement? But, despite the careful selection that could still be carried out at that difficult time, people came across different. Life has shown that among them were both deserters and traitors. But the main thing was that people were sorely lacking. In search of the necessary personnel, the head of the special school had to wander around the Astrakhan organizations, looking for and begging for the right people. And he found them in teams of convalescents in hospitals located in the Astrakhan region, in Kalmyk and Rostov organizations evacuated to Astrakhan. This prompted the TsSHPD on September 18, 1942 to turn to the Military Councils

of the Transcaucasian and Stalingrad fronts for help with trained and fired personnel. As a result, an order was issued to the command of the 28th Army to allocate thirty people, mostly of indigenous nationality, to special school No. 005. A similar instruction was received by the Military Council of the 51st Army.

Apparently, the Military Council of the Transcaucasian Front also received a similar instruction. It was on the basis of this instruction that the order of the 28th reserve rifle brigade, located in the Georgian town of Av-chaly, and the 38th reserve rifle brigade followed,

located in the small town of Surami, on the allocation of certain groups of junior commanders from their composition, preferably already "sniffing gunpowder". In the

second half of September, the headquarters of the Southern Department of the TsSHPD and the sabotage and reconnaissance school No. 005 formed under it began to operate. By the end of September, more than 300

people were thrown behind enemy lines. However, the first attempts to send sabotage and reconnaissance groups to the occupied territory of Kalmykia ended sadly. Hastily prepared and poorly armed groups, despite heroic resistance, became easy prey for a well-armed and trained enemy.

Meanwhile, the following events took place on the southern direction of the Soviet-German front from the left and right flanks from the Astrakhan defensive line: on September, the fighting ended on the passes of the Central part of the Caucasian ridge. The 46th Army defeated the German units and drove their remnants back to its northern slopes. The Germans never managed to implement a plan to intercept the Black Sea communications of the Soviet troops. On September 22, the 1st Panzer Army of Colonel General Ewald von Kleist, developing its offensive, crossed the Terek River near Mozdok. For two weeks there were stubborn battles for Mozdok. Oil wells were burning all around. On September 25, German troops broke through the Soviet defenses, captured Nalchik and began advancing towards Vladikavkaz. But at the walls of this city,

their offensive bogged down. And at the same time, on the right flank, the 6th Army of Colonel-General Friedrich Wilhelm von Paulus, included in Army Group B, rammed the Soviet defenses on the Don and got stuck in

the ruins of Stalingrad. At the end of September, the military foreman of the Kuban Cossack army N.G. Nazarenko, who made a cavalry detachment of several hundred people from the inhabitants of the Kuban, opponents of Soviet power, led him from the foothills of the Caucasus to the Don and began military operations on the communications of the retreating Red Army units. Later, in October, he joined his detachment to the German army, in which he began to act as a Cossack reconnaissance battalion. And in December 1942, he officially entered th

group of Colonel von Pannwitz. On September 28, the State Defense Committee decided to reorganize the front-line headquarters of the partisan movement into representative offices of the TsSHPD on active fronts. At the same time, on the same day, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command renamed the Stalingrad Front into the Don Front, and the South-Eastern Front into the Stalingrad Front.

Chapter

3 A little about myself and how I got into sabotage and reconnaissance special school No. 005

I was born in Moscow in 1925 in the family of Joseph (Osip) Aronovich Pyatnitsky, one of the founders and leaders of the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International (Comintern). From 1921 to 1935, my father directed the organizational and secret activities of all the communist parties that were part of the Comintern. Since 1935, as a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, he headed the Political and Administrative Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. But in June 1937, he spoke at the Plenum of the Central Committee condemning Stalin's policy of terror and genocide against the Soviet people. For this, Stalin

began to consider my father his personal enemy. In the late 1930s, my family was repressed: my father and older brother Igor, a 10th grade student, in 1937, my mother, Yulia Iosifovna, and myself in 1938. I was only 13 at the time. They placed me in the children's reception center of the NKVD. But they could not bring me to criminal responsibility, since the criminal code of the Land of Soviets provided for criminal liability only

from the age of 14. Then the authoritative medical commission of this department ruled that my metric was incorrect, and found that the subject being examined, that is, me, was at least 14 years old. Thus, I immediately matured by one year. But this time the leadership of the NKVD changed. N.I. Yezhov (1895–1940) was arrested and replaced by L.P. Beria (1899–1953). A cleansing of places of detention began, and I was sent to the Kuban, to the Kropotkin colony for juvenile delinquents. From there I soon fled, but was detained in Armavir and sent to an orphanage in the village of Voznesenskaya. There he joined the Komsomol and became the secretary of the Komsomol organization. Then he m

my senior comrade Stepan Kozlov, who was the Komsomol organizer of the school where I studied, and then the Komsomol organizer of the village where our

orphanage was located. In 1942, when the Germans approached Rostov-on-Don, and in the Kuban they began to create extermination detachments to fight German landings and Cossack bandit groups, Styopa Kozlov became the political instructor of the extermination detachment of the Labinsk

region and included me in his detachment. That's when he edited my biography in such a way that later I could pass all the checks. It said that I don't remember my parents, that from an early age I hung out in different orphanages, that I was a "state child". And he made me a certificate, certified by the seal of the district committee of the Komsomol. This document helped me a lot in the future.

At this time, the German army broke through to the Kuban. Our fighter detachment accompanied the district column during its withdrawal to the Caucasus to the Mozdok region and further to Makhachkala. There, after we were bombed, our paths parted. My two classmates, Gavriil Morgovsky and Valentin Tropinin, and I got to Derbent and there, in the city military registration and enlistment office, we signed up for the army. The military registration and enlistment office sent us to the 28th reserve rifle brigade, where we, as literate guys who had completed 9 classes, were immediately enrolled in a training battalion, in a regimental school of machine gunners.

And then there was one of the paradoxes of fate. My older brother Igor was accused of having created a youth sabotage group "Children for Fathers" at his school and received ten years in the camps for this, and I, his brother, was sent to study at the top-secret sabotage and reconnaissance special school No. 005 TsShPD . But the story goes on. So, I was still in

the training battalion of the 28th Reserve Rifle Brigade, completing a junior commander training course there as a machine gunner. There we were intensively trained to work on the machine gun of the Maxim system. We quickly mastered the material part and firing from this machine gun, but the tactics of using it in various battle conditions were hammered into us by draconian methods. Classes lasted 12 or more hours a day.

They consisted mainly in the fact that our company of machine gunner cadets all the time stormed the positions of a mock enemy located on the hills or in other fortified positions, or we marched in marching order when the Maxim machine gun was divided into parts: the body (barrel with a shield) and machine. At the same time, the first number of the calculation carries the "body" on his shoulder, and

the second number puts the machine on his shoulders, sticking his head between the links of his machine with the wheels forward, while the third number carries boxes with machine-gun belts. Each of these parts weighed over 30 kilograms. And we, cadets, young guys at that time weighed 60-70 kilograms ourselves, that is, like this machine gun in assembled form and were dressed only in tunics. So all the metal lay on

the clavicles of the almost bare shoulders of our shoulders.

Meanwhile, one team followed the other, either "running march", or "cavalry on the left or right". At the same time, we removed our load from our shoulders, assembled the machine gun "for battle", inserted a tape into it, and it prepared to repel the attack. Then the command sounded to prepare for the march, while the machine gun was again dismantled. All this was recorded in time, and if we did not fit into the prescribed standard, then everything was repeated again and again. Since these and other commands followed incessantly, we formed calluses on

collarbones.

These commands alternated with orders to deploy in a line for the offensive. At the same time, it was necessary to assemble a machine gun and roll it behind you, moving in chains. Plus, the constant commands "lie down", "get up", "run", "step" and so on for 10-12 hours a day, not counting lunch. And by the end of the day, a march was made to the location of the brigade, and when passing by the headquarters of the brigade, it was always a marching step and with a song. If the leadership didn't like it, then the command followed: "circle, run, march", we ran 50 meters, or even 100 meters, and everything was repeated again, and this was with a load on our shoulders. So we were drawn into combat life. The direct commander of our platoon was senior

sergeant Fyodor Voronin, a very strict and fair guy, six years older than us cadets. He had already been in battles, was wounded and after the hospital ended up in a reserve brigade. And although he sympathized with us, tormented us mercilessly, making no concessions to anyone, and to everyone

treated the same. Every day he explained to us, repeating like a prayer, "that the harder it is to learn, the easier it is to fight." We learned this ironically and, gritting our teeth, endured all the vicissitudes of our studies. How showed life, it helped a lot later.

One evening at the end of September, during dinner, the local radio broadcast an order: "The Komsomol members of the brigade must gather in the club. Company commanders to ensure turnout. At the formation after dinner, the Komsomol members of our company (which was considered the regimental school of the brigade) were separated from the rest and brought to the club in formation. The club served as a wooden hut, where brigade units watched films in turn. Party and Komsomol meetings were also held there, marching companies were formed to be sent to the front to replenish existing units. In the club of the Komsomol members who arrived, they built. After the command "attention", the brigade

commander appeared in front of the formation. I saw him for the first time. Such a high rank did not indulge us with its attention. The command followed: "Komsomol members whose parents remained in the occupied territory, three steps forward." Those who failed were taken back to the barracks. This divided our inseparable trio: Gavriil Morgovsky and Valentin Tropinin left the club, but I stayed. The following command followed: "Komsomol Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Jews three steps forward!" About a hundred people came out. I went out too. We were lined up three in a row and taken to the brigade headquarters. The rest were dismissed. We were ordered to sort out the divisions, line up at the back of the head to each other and alternately approach one of the three tables set in front of the headquarters building. The entire area in front of the headquarters was illuminated by special lanterns, closed from above. Three commanders sat at each table, as it turned out later, the commander, the commissar and the special officer of

the regiment. Everyone who, in turn, approached the table, reported his last name, first name, patronymic, year and place of birth, information about his parents and military specialty. Immediately, some were sent to the left, others were released to the location of their units. When it was my turn, I reported that I was from an orphanage, that is, a state child, and I don't remember my parents. Apparently, I satisfied their demands and was sent to the left.

By the end of this procedure, 45 people remained on the left side of the site. We were all taken to one of the headquarters rooms and from there we were summoned one by one to another adjoining room. There, at a large table covered with green cloth, several commanders of a higher rank settled down. The survey procedure was repeated, only carried out more scrupulously. Half of us were weeded out again. What was the selection criterion, we did not understand. There are only 25 of us left. Of my acquaintances, there was only one, my recent teacher, platoon commander Fyodor Voronin. He was a regular military man, he also participated in the war with the Finns. As he later admitted, he really liked my surname and he always and everywhere, wherever people were required, shouted out my surname first.

We, selected for some task, were left to spend the night at the headquarters of the brigade, and in the morning they were loaded onto a ZIL-5 covered truck and taken somewhere. In the army, we were taught not to show curiosity. The less you know, the better. But after all, everyone is interested in their own destiny! Among ourselves, of course, we wondered about what awaits us in the future.

They brought us to the courtyard of a building. Then we learned that it was the Special Department of the headquarters of the Transcaucasian Front. So we ended up in Tbilisi. They unloaded there. After a while, another similar car came up. When she was unloading, we saw a group of junior commanders, also 25 people. They arrived from the 38th reserve brigade, located near the city of Surami. They marinated us in the courtyard of the Special Department for four hours.

The building and courtyard of the Special Department were guarded, we were not allowed outside the fence. Then they began to call us inside the building one at a time, shouting our names. We, huddled together, got to know each other, talked about anything, but not about what awaits us. Our only concern was that none of our comrades who had been summoned came back. This was perplexing and alarming.

Finally, I heard: "Senior Sergeant Pyatnitsky!" I was only awarded this title a few days ago, and at first I did not react to the command. But Fyodor Voronin pushed me to the front door to the building of the Special Department. After walking down a long corridor, I ended up in a large room. In the depths, at its wall, at a long table, were sitting about nine chiefs in military uniform and in civilian clothes.

I reported myself. Questions poured in. I answered the way my former stanitsa Komsomol organizer Styopa Kozlov taught me, that is, the half-truth about my origin. They read out my testimonial, from which I learned that I was an excellent student in combat and political training, that for my good knowledge of materiel and its use I was ahead of schedule awarded the rank of senior sergeant, that during my training in the training company I acted as deputy political instructor, and so on. I listened to it like a story about someone else. A small shiver beat me, because I had never seen so many big bosses at once and I was very shy. But then I

was taken aback by the remark of one commander, who was sitting in the center of the table. He said: "good guy, but too small, squishy." It was, of course, about me. And at that time I was utterly thin with a height of 164 centimeters and looked very unattractive. In the ranks, I was always on the left flank and was very sorry that I was unlucky with growth. I realized that this retort was a sentence for me, that I was being rejected from some business, apparently, judging by the preparation, very significant. This remark was about me, but it was intended as a setting for the commission that was sitting at the table.

And then, taking a deep breath, I blurted out the first thing that came to mind: "the spool is small, but expensive." Then a man in military uniform, but without insignia in his buttonholes, said: "Wow, what a smart one, I like him!" And he offered to approve my candidacy. He was answered: "under your responsibility, Comrade Mikhailov." And they pointed me to one of the doors. I went out and got into the room, where there were already several people from those who had been called before me. So the rest, who were screened

out, went out through another door. About forty minutes later Fyodor Voronin, the only person I knew in our new company, joined us. He also went through this purgatory.

Later, a few years later, I learned that my defender, "Comrade Mikhailov", was the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol after the arrest of Kosarev. Here's how

we got to know each other. When the selection procedure was over, we, selected 30 junior commanders from both brigades, were taken out into the yard, lined up and informed that we were all going on a special mission, that the Motherland trusted us, and we owe this high trust

justify. Then came the half-staff comrade Mikhailov, who supported my candidacy. After his parting words, we were again led somewhere in formation, given new uniforms, fed with dinner, given dry rations for five days and taken to the station. They put us on a train and we went to the city of Baku. We were accompanied by a battalion commissar with a sleeper in his buttonholes.

It took almost two days to get to Baku. It was very hot and stuffy. They traveled in a carriage. At the stops, which were very long, the locals sold various fruits, melons and watermelons, but we had no money for them. We had to be content with boiling water, breadcrumbs and herring, which we were given in dry rations.

In Baku, from the railway station, we walked in formation to the marina. After many hours of waiting, already in the evening, we were loaded onto a paddle steamer with the then incomprehensible name "Kollontai" and taken somewhere along the Caspian. Our so-called steamboat was obviously of antediluvian design. On its sides were paddle wheels, during operation they made a strange sound, like champing, every time the wheel blades entered the water. There was one large hold on the ship, where they loaded three wagons of shag for the Stalingrad Front, and, as an appendage to it, our team. In the superstructure above the engine room, there was a small compartment, which the team called the "salon". It looked like a reserved seat car, only much smaller. It was in this "salon" that we were placed. And our escort was accommodated in the cabin of the captain, who did not leave the bridge all the way. The night passed

quietly. By noon the next day we arrived at the port of Shevchenko. It is on the opposite bank of the Caspian Sea and halfway to Astrakhan. There we were fed fish soup and watermelons. They ate as much as they could fit into each one. Late in the evening, a large tanker "Lenin" approached, accompanied by two gunboats. It turned out that in the port of Shevchenko, a convoy of oil tankers was being formed, transporting oil and gasoline to Astrakhan. The convoy consisted of the tanker "Lenin" and several self-propelled oil barges, plus two gunboats.

When it was completely dark, on a light signal from the tanker, which became the flagship of the convoy, self-propelled barges lined up in two parallel wake columns. The tanker was leading, our

"Kollontai" became the last one. The gunboats went one after another, to the left of the convoy, guarding it from the west.

By midnight the weather began to deteriorate, a sharp wind blew from the east. The excitement intensified. And the wave in the Caspian is very steep. Soon a real storm broke out. The convoy

lost formation. Self-propelled barges swept in different directions, although within sight. The pitch was terrible. Everyone was sick, including the team of our Kollontai, not to mention my comrades, who were going nowhere. Our ship is far behind the rest of the ships.

I had never been exposed to sea rolling before and did not know what it was. It had an unexpected effect on me. Everyone around was throwing up, but, on the contrary, I was attacked by a brutal appetite, I ate the remnants of my dry ration, and finished eating what others refused. Most swayed so that they could not raise their heads from the shelves on which they lay in bed. And when it began to dawn, and our convoy began to be drawn into the Volga delta, German Junkers-87 dive bombers flew in - "crutches", as they were called in the army. There were more than two dozen of them. The picture was terrible. Oil barges burned, the sea around them burned. Splashes of water from

bombs falling near the side washed the deck of our Kollontai. The captain of the steamer stood on the open part of the bridge, holding on to the handrail. Apparently, only the two of us did not react to the pitching. But he, the old sea dog, smoked one spin after another, and I constantly chewed crackers and watched with fear how the sea was burning around. I couldn't swim. Suddenly, the captain, seeing me under the bridge, overlaid with a cool obscenity and commanded: "to the machine gun, son!", Pointing out to me some

strange object standing on the bridge under a canvas cover. At that time, I was standing on the deck under the bridge, holding by the collar of my former platoon commander, who was turning inside out in another bout of vomiting. Fedya Voronin, my former mentor, heard the captain's order, croaked: "Drag me to the machine gun." With tremendous effort, I managed to pull him onto the bridge, after which I pulled the

case from the object that was on the left wing of the bridge. It turned out that it was a native "Maxim", only a double one - two trunks (two "bodies", as they

called our instructors at the regimental school), fastened together and installed on one rack, providing a circular turn. The machine guns did not have protective shields, so I did not immediately realize that these were "Maximki". That's what we called them among ourselves. Machine gun "Maxim" I knew perfectly. Fedya Voronin hammered into me the knowledge of his design with constant outfits. I was the first number, Fedya the second, and we began to

shoot, not knowing where. I was shaking from fear and from the return of the twin installation. Fedya stood beside him, half-bent and straightening the ribbon. He, too, shuddered, but from vomiting. His stomach was empty, he vomited pure bile and was shaking all over. He then fell to his knees, then rose, supporting the ribbons. And all around was burning oil and gasoline from wrecked oil barges. The Germans threw bombs mixed with iron barrels with punched holes. As they fell, they let out a soul-rending roar, from

which the skin was covered with goosebumps. The captain shouted: "Shoot, sons!". From the rumble of "maxims" it was not so scary to others. And, indeed, the sounds of firing machine guns, especially the

traces of their tracer bullets, calmed us ourselves, and probably disturbed the Germans. They preferred oil barges, and especially hunted for a tanker. The gunboats escorting us focused their attention on guarding it. The barges were completely defenseless, they were left to extricate themselves from

folded position.

Meanwhile, the elements continued to rage. Our Kollontai was blown aside and we ran aground. The gunboats, protecting the tanker carrying gasoline, abandoned the barges to their fate. What happened next with our convoy - I do not know. In the morning, we were removed from the Kollontai by fishing boats and delivered to Astrakhan. There we saw a tanker moored at the berth under the protection of coastal anti-aircraft guns. He was unloading. There,

in the military harbor, we washed ourselves. We were given hot tea. Nobody could eat. After everything we had experienced, our legs did not obey well when we were led into the city. They walked in a bunch, they could not keep the formation. Walked for a long time. Finally, we stopped at a nondescript building on the embankment of some canal, enclosed by a high fence. On the building at the gate there was a sign "School of Instructors of General Educ

the attendant knocked on the gate, it opened. He presented his documents, went inside and was absent for a long time.

We moved to the other side of the road and crowded around the parapet of some canal opposite the gate, nervously smoking, gradually coming to our senses. It was completely incomprehensible to us what relation we had to universal education. After all, we were told about some special task.

Finally, the gates swung open, we went inside in a bunch, but were forced to stop in front of other closed gates, as in a prison. The outer gate closed and we found ourselves in a small enclosed space between two closed gates. To the right of the first gate was a small door that led into the building.

About thirty minutes later a senior lieutenant came out of this door and called the first of us. So one by one we were called to the second floor to a large room, which, as we later found out, was the operational department of the headquarters of the partisan department of southern Russia. It was also the headquarters of the sabotage and reconnaissance schools.

We already knew the dating process. Six people were seated at a large table. We approached the table one by one and reported our data. Emphasis was placed on military and civilian specialties. Especially valued were people who had already been in battles, that is, those who had already been fired upon. Most of us got into the army right from school, so we did not have a civilian specialty. As we were later explained, the average age of our team was 20 years. I was only seventeen at the time. At the table were representatives of the TsShPD: Ryzhikov, Shestakov,

Toritsyn, the head of the operational group of the Kalmyk Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, a representative of the intelligence department of the 28th Army, whose last name we did not learn, and the head of the special school, battalion commissar A.M. Dobroserdov. But we learned about this a little later.

After an individual acquaintance with each of us, we lined up in the courtyard, but already on the other side of the second gate, and here we were announced that we had arrived for further service in the special sabotage and reconnaissance school No. 005 of the Southern Group of the TsSHPD. They

explained to us that we, junior army commanders, were specially assigned to carry out special tasks of command in the rear

enemy, that our training will be short-lived, since we have already been trained in shooting. We only have to learn the basics of mine-blasting, the tactics of partisan and sabotage actions, get acquainted with German weapons, and learn the basics of a German phrasebook.

Chapter

4 Astrakhan sabotage and reconnaissance special school No. 005

October 1942

In the steppe regions, where we were to operate in the future, the nature of the terrain did not allow the creation of large partisan formations. Therefore, Special School No. 005 practiced the creation of small sabotage and reconnaissance groups, which were instructed to avoid open clashes with the enemy, inflict damage on him mainly by sabotage and conduct reconnaissance activities. The forms of partisan actions were influenced by specific physical and geographical conditions. We were warned that the training course of our group

would be reduced to a month, and then we would be divided into detachments that would be thrown behind enemy lines, into the territory occupied by them. We must become, as we were told, the main core of the emerging sabotage and reconnaissance (partisan) groups, rally the youth who have not been fired upon, become the backbone of the leadership of the headquarters and the group commanders appointed by them. On this, the introductory part ended, and the authorities left us. So in the first ten days of October

1942, we became cadets of the Astrakhan sabotage and reconnaissance special school No. divided into separate rooms. We were given one of them for 30 people. There were bunk beds in a row against a blank wall in the room. On the opposite side, between the windows, there were two large tables and several chairs. A long hanger was nailed to the wall by the door. Each

place on it had two hooks for clothes, serial numbers were indicated on top of them. All beds were marked with the same numbers.

We were given time to familiarize ourselves with the situation until the end of the day. School started in the morning. In terms of its intensity, it was not much different from studying in a reserve brigade, only drill was completely absent. And the relationship between the authorities and the cadets here was more trusting. First of all, they checked how one of us owns a weapon. We fired from rifles and submachine guns, both our own and captured

ones. There were several machine gunners among us. We were introduced to the German light machine gun MG-34. They shot from it, passed the test. This marks the end of the training. We shot no worse than our instructors. Therefore, the main attention in our training was given to subversion and special tactics of guerrilla operations. Unknown people

appeared imperceptibly, sometimes in small groups, and also disappeared imperceptibly. It was messengers, leaders of the underground, newly formed sabotage and reconnaissance groups and partisan detachments who went on a mission.

At the school, there was also a reorganization of those groups and detachments that were lucky, having completed the assigned work, to survive and return home to the base. On October 12, four groups left the location of the special school at once.

a) No. 51, commander I.N. Chernyshov, codename "Old Men", 21 fighters. It was sent to the Western ulus of Kalmykia with the task of disrupting enemy transportation and communication along the Sandat-Bashant-Yashant

roads. b) No. 55, commander V.N. Kravchenko (large), as there was another group commander Kravchenko (small), codenamed "Avenger", 18 fighters. It was sent to the Priyutinsky ulus and the North-East region of the village of Divnoye with the task of disrupting enemy communications connecting the points of Divnoye - Priyutnoye - Elista. c) No. 57, commander P.N.

Yakovlev, codename "Pavel", 19 fighters. The area of its action was determined in the Trotsky ulus of the republic. The task assigned to this group is to control movements and disrupt transportation along the Trotskoye-Ovata, Chilki-Sarkha roads.

d) No. 59, commander I.G. Germashov, 22 fighters. She was heading to the area of action Elista - Yashkul with the task of paralyzing the movement of the enemy along the Elista - Yashkul road. This was the only highway through which the Germans contacted one of the most important sectors of the Khulkhut front - Arkhangel'skoye [8]. We were categorically not recommended to show excessive interest

in what is happening around. We learned this rule well and did not show much curiosity. But the disappearance of entire groups of familiar people and the appearance of new ones was impossible not to notice. Between ourselves, we usually exchanged impressions about what was happening.

Later, much later, after the liberation of Kalmykia, we learned what was happening in our special school and about the combat operations of sabotage and reconnaissance groups abandoned behind enemy lines. For example, from the memorandum of the Kalmyk Regional Party

Committee to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on the results of the partisan movement in Kalmykia dated October 1942, signed by the secretary of the regional committee L. Likhomidov and P. Kasatkin, head of the operational group of the regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks [9], found out, What:

"During September (Astrakhan special school - V.P.) 268 people were trained, armed and sent behind enemy lines to the territory of the occupied uluses of the Kalmyk ASSR, the remaining 42 people to the Stalingrad, Rostov regions and Ordzhonikidzovskiy region.

As part of the partisan detachments and under their cover, 9 communists and 9 Komsomol members were sent to the rear of the enemy for underground work as organizers of subversive work.

On October 16, a sabotage reconnaissance group S.A. was abandoned behind enemy lines. Kolomeitsev, consisting of 16 people in the Tavan-Gasha base area and additionally Khunduk Khargota. On October 30, A.R. Potapov No. 50 "Andrey", numbering 20 fighters. The area of its operation is a section of the railway from Ipatovo to Petrovsky.

The main tasks that were set before the sabotage reconnaissance groups and partisan detachments sent behind enemy lines were: a) Organizing the struggle of the broad

masses of the population remaining in the occupied territory against the German invaders by creating new partisan detachments and sabotage groups and directing their work. b) Preventing the transfer of enemy troops by mining certain sections

of roads with anti-personnel, anti-tank mines and special land mines.

c) Destruction of vehicles and convoys of the enemy with ammunition, equipment and fuel. d) Destruction of small enemy units

by setting up ambushes, attacking their camps and halts.

e) Destruction of bridges over beams and wells adjacent to roads. f) Destruction

of enemy communication lines, communication centers, separate walkie-talkies, the destruction of communications officers and messengers, the capture of enemy documents and their transfer to headquarters.

g) Careful reconnaissance of enemy units, their deployment, numbers, numbering and weapons, and the transfer of this information to headquarters.

h) Destruction of traitors to the Motherland. i) Preventing the enemy from exporting grain and livestock from the areas of deployment by attacking transports and carts. Used food to create their own bases and for distribution to the population. Leftover food must be completely destroyed.

Otherwise should be guided by personal considerations[10].

October was coming to an end. Time flew by imperceptibly. Classes were held either in theory - in the classes of a special school, or practical classes - outside the city. There we practiced creating various combinations of explosive devices and learned marching formation. It's not like in the army at all. Here we were intensively trained to walk foot to foot, keeping a certain distance, mainly three meters, while constantly increasing

loads. We were hung with two duffel bags, like parachutes, but filled with sand. One is lighter in front, the other is heavier in the back, gradually increasing the load to 40 kilograms. We

had to learn to complete automatically the actions on the command "to lie down on the move", taking off the luggage from the shoulders, and in a certain order, so that the rear bag with "ammunition" was always on the right side "at hand", and the smaller one was in front and served as a support for weapons. They taught us, junior commanders, how to dig in. It was also not the same as in the army. In October, this procedure was a daily obligatory ritual for our team.

One day at the end of October, we noticed a new face in the dressing room of the dining room, where we usually smoked after dinner, grouped for regular classes. This man arrived for lunch on the second shift and immediately attracted our attention, as he was not dressed in uniform.

He wore a long officer's overcoat, obviously made to order. But there were four green triangles in the buttonholes - that means the foreman. There were several foremen in our team. Yes, and I was a senior sergeant. But this new man was clearly different from us.

At first we thought he was a staff officer. But his appearance immediately aroused respect. He was tall, slim and strong looking. On his head sat a dark kubanka with gray hair, from under which a dark blond forelock peeked out. Hump nose, small mustache, bright eyes, watchful, attentive look. He looked like a Kuban Cossack from the foothills. I have met people of this type before in the Maikop region. Then we met

with him several times. Sometimes he was present at our assignments, as a person freely defined, that is, classes were not obligatory for him. Basically, as we determined, he was interested in practical exercises in mine blasting. He was very silent. He did not participate in our conversations, but listened to them attentively. He did not tell about himself, it was not customary for us. When we met, he introduced himself to us - Leonid Chernyakhovsky. And if among ourselves we

addressed each other by name, sometimes by surname, then to Chernyakhovsky only by rank - "comrade foreman" or by name and patronymic - Leonid Matveyevich, as to a senior comrade. He was older than us by an average of eight years and

caused universal respect both among us (cadets) and among our instructors.

Over time, we learned that he was a regular military conscript. Participated in the war with Finland, began the Patriotic War on the border, was the commander of a regimental intelligence platoon. Twice wounded, the last time on the Don. The head of the school found him in one of the hospitals and persuaded him to go to our special school. I dwell on the personality of Leonid Matveyevich

Chernyakhovsky on purpose, since his story for me and for the entire Fatherland was and still is of particular interest, and for my story and its continuation.

From the resolution of the Military Council of the 28th Army on the state and further deployment of the partisan movement in the occupied territory of the Kalmyk ASSR (document 128 of October 28, 1942): "As of October 25, 1942, 98 people were trained and sent behind

enemy lines in the regions of the Kalmyk ASSR, 120 people are preparing to be sent. The slowness in organizing and sending partisans is explained by the lack of technical means of

communication (walkie-talkie), weapons, ammunition and underwear. At the beginning of September, all this was promised by representatives of the TsSHPD, but nothing was received

until October 26, and all dispatches of partisan detachments were provided by the Military Council of the 28th Army. A big drawback in the formation of partisan detachments is the lack of the required number of partisans with military training.

The Military Council of the 28th Army decides: To strengthen the partisan movement in the occupied territory of the Kalmyk ASSR: 1. To

allow the secretary of the Kalmyk regional committee of the CPSU (b) comrade Kasatkin, through the intelligence department of the army headquarters, to recruit from fighters, commanders and political workers of army units in the amount of 30 people, mostly of indigenous nationality. 2. To the

head of the intelligence department of the army headquarters, Major Comrade Zenkovich, allocate two radio operators with walkie-talkies and ensure uninterrupted communication

through your connection.

3. To provide the chief of artillery with weapons and ammunition priority detachments in the amount of 100 people.

4. Brigade commander Andriyanov to release 300 incendiary bottles for the regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of the Kalmyk

ASSR. 5. To the head of the rear of the army, brigade commander comrade Yasnevsky, allocate for partisans of the Kalmyk Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks 150 pairs of underwear.

6. To ask the Military Council of the Stalingrad Front for the delivery of ammunition, food and clothing by a partisan detachment to allocate one transport aircraft. 7. To ask the Central Headquarters

of the partisan movement to send weapons, ammunition and radio operators with walkie-talkies in the coming days to ensure further work on sending partisans of the Kalmyk ASSR behind enemy lines. Note: The decision was adopted on the report of the

Secretary of

the Kalmyk Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Comrade Kasatkin.

Commander of the 28th Army, Lieutenant General Gerasimenko

Member of the Military Council of the 28th Army, Corps Commissar

Melnikov "[11]—

October 31, 1942 TsSHPD made a decision: "To improve control and communications with partisan detachments and sabotage reconnaissance groups to divide the occupied zone of this section of the front into sectors. In early November

1942, the Military Council of the Stalingrad Front also created the headquarters of the partisan movement of the front. He realized that the partisans would have to operate in unheard of difficult conditions, and began to intensively form and send flying partisan groups into the Don steppes with the task of strengthening control on the main highways used by the enemy. There were only two railways near Stalingrad, and one of them was North Caucasian.

We did not know anything about the representatives of the TSShPD and hardly

communicated with them. General Iosif Ivanovich Ryzhikov, representative of the Central Headquarters in the south of the country, I saw only three or four times.

The first meeting took place immediately upon arrival at the special school. He headed the commission that received us.

The general was in a civilian suit, stocky, polite, he always addressed us, the junior commanders, who arrived, which was completely unusual for us. This is the first time I have encountered such a phenomenon in my short military service. When it was my turn to appear before the Eyes of the authorities, he looked at me attentively and asked almost no questions. I met him a couple of times at headquarters when I was on duty at the special school. The last time we met with him was at the end of December when taking the partisan oath - the oath, after familiarizing myself with the order to enroll me in the group of V.N. Kravchenko No. 55 "Avenger". Later, I learned that he was one of the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Party of Belarus and, together with Panteleimon Kondratovich Ponomarenko, was the creator of the TsSHPD.

I met Major Shestakov more often. Apparently, he was the chief of staff of the TsSHPD representative office, and on official documents he signed as deputy representative of the Central Staff of General Ryzhikov. He was tall, slender, always fit, apparently

a military man. Look closely, attentive. He often walked around the classrooms - classes, as we called them among ourselves, carefully looked at everything, but never interfered in anything. Sometimes he called his senior comrades to his headquarters for an interview when they selected leaders for the next groups to send them behind enemy lines. Always conspicuous were his polished boots. The commanders and commissars of sabotage and reconnaissance groups were usually selected from among the

secretaries of the ulusoms (district committees) of the party, the chairmen of the ulus councils and the heads of the political departments of the MTS from the occupied areas, who knew well the customs of the local population and the places of the upcoming hostilities. From our brethren, young junior commanders, group leaders were rarely appointed. Toritsin, also a representative of the TsSHPD, we saw mainly at party

and Komsomol meetings, which were often held jointly. In these cases, general questions were considered together, and then the Komsomol members were released, and the senior communist comrades considered their problems separately. But the name Toritsina is all

the cadets knew well, since the address of our special school for communication with relatives and friends was as follows: Astrakhan, regional committee of the Komsomol, comrade. To-ricinu for such and such. Apparently, his

residence was there, in the regional committee of the Komsomol. But I personally had no one to correspond with. I no longer had a family. I briefly reported to my relatives and friends where I am, that while I am alive and well. We were forbidden to write about the special school and studies. So I didn't get any emails. A couple of times there was news from my friend Zhenya Loginov, the son of Stalin's secretary, from M.K. Muranova (1873–1959) and E.D. Stasova (1873–1966), whose names were well known at that time, especially in party circles. So these letters deciphered me, despite the fact that I significantly edited my biography even when I decided to go

to the front voluntarily. We communicated constantly with the management of the special school. The head of special school No. 055, as I mentioned earlier, was the senior political instructor Dobroserdov Alexei Mikhailovich. But in personal meetings, we called

him simply by his first name and patronymic. Alexey Mikhailovich for us, cadets, was both a commander and a caring nanny. He knew each of us, he knew who breathes what and what he is capable of. And if he punished anyone, it was for misconduct, by which he could not pass. He was both an educator, and a teacher, and a senior comrade at the same time.

He treated me very carefully. My teammates told me more than once that the boss "had an eye on you." But only after the war I found out the reason for his attitude towards me. Already after the

end of the war, while on business trips in Astrakhan, I repeatedly met with Dobroserdov. At the table in his apartment, over a glass of vodka, recalling our special school and fallen comrades, he told me that in 1936 he was summoned to Moscow to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to the Political and Administrative Department, which at that time was headed by Osip Pyatnitsky and, looking at me, added - your father. Alexey Mikhailovich told me: "At that time, the Central Committee was conducting an inspection of the southern regions of the Union. And on the day when I arrived in Moscow on the call of Osip Aronovich, he felt unwell and, through his secretary, invited me to come for a co

to your home, to your home office. The conversation, or rather my report, went on until late in the evening.

Dobroserdov stayed with us for dinner and overnight. There he met me, a boy. I didn't remember this, of course. After all, so many people passed through my father's home office. But A.M. Dobroserdov remembered me by my swarthy skin, a broken tooth, and a peculiar dialect. So he explained to me. All this, attached to my last name, revealed me completely. He understood who I am. But he did not dispute my legend with a biography. Whether he shared his discovery with the leadership of the headquarters, he did not say, but he took care of me imperceptibly, without making any

concessions. With the deputy head of the special school I.Ya. Sleeveless and instructors-teachers lieutenants P.E. Tishkalov, I.A. Fridman, O.M. Boryaeva and A.P. Fedotov, we spent all the time allotted for study and training. They taught and instructed us in everything that we had to do behind enemy lines. In November, our

training program changed somewhat. We studied all types of explosives, the design of fuses, both domestic and captured, how to use them in various conditions dictated by the situation.

Particular attention was paid to the tactics of sabotage work in the steppe conditions, topography and determining one's location in the steppe, where there are no landmarks.

We studied these items according to notes compiled by the best demolition officer of the Red Army, the founder of the tactics of sabotage, Ilya Grigorievich Starinov, who decades later was proudly called by some - saboteur No. 1, others - the founder of the special forces of the Soviet army.

Chapter

5 Saboteur No. 1 in the Red Army, Colonel I.G. Starinov

Here, I believe, it is necessary to write about this wonderful person in more detail. Ilya

Grigoryevich Starinov (1900–2000) was at the origins of the creation of Soviet military intelligence, the development of a strategy for the partisan movement and the military doctrine of the Red Army, adopted for action in the 20s. He is rightly considered the founding father of the Soviet sabotage school. Life of I.G. Starinova was so classified that it was impossible to find out any biographical information about him before.

In June 1919 he voluntarily joined the Red Army, and in October 1920 he joined the Bolshevik Party. In the same year, he was appointed head of the subversive team of the Red Army railway range, and in 1929 he was connected to the training of partisan personnel, which had not stopped in the USSR since the Civil War. This training was carried out both through the OGPU and through military intelligence. At that time, Ilya Grigorievich taught

mine-demolition work to saboteurs and underground workers in educational institutions of the road transport department of the OGPU of the South-Western Railway, and later in special schools in Kharkov, Kupyansk (OGPU) and Kiev (Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army). The OGPU trained mostly underground saboteurs, heavily conspiratorial. Commanders were trained along the line of the RU of the Red Army, who, having got into the rear of the enemy with units, could go over to resistance. For this purpose, hidden partisan bases with a large supply of mine-disruptive means were created in Moldova, Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. Warehouses on the coast of the Danube were created even in underwater tanks with a waterproof shell. In 1930–1932, I.G. Starinov was in the leadership of the intelligence department of the Ukrainian military district. In this job, he became intimately acquainted with and collaborated with

the commander of the district, Iona Emannuilovich Yakir (1896–1937), the commander of the neighboring Belarusian district, Ieronim Petrovich Uborevich (1896–1937), and with the head of the RU (in 1924–35 and 1937) Yan Karlovich Berzin (1889–1938). Together with them, he developed the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare in case the armies of the imperialist countries invaded the territory of the Soviet Union. According to him, in general terms, it looked like this:

“In 1932, the defense of our country on the Western borders was based on the use of partisan formations. The enemy troops, having crossed the state border and deepened into our territory, were supposed to run into fortified areas and get bogged down in a positional war.

At this time, in the occupied territory, the partisans begin organized resistance and cut off communications to the enemy. After some time, having lost fresh reinforcements, ammunition and food, the enemy begins to retreat. Partisan formations withdraw with them, all the time remaining in his rear and continuing sabotage. At the same time, they can even cross the state border. It was a very well thought out system, not only in case of occupation of our

territory. Supply bases for the partisans were also laid on the territory of the alleged enemy. It was very important that maneuverable partisan formations were being prepared, capable of operating both on their own and on foreign territory”[12]. In this relatively short period of time, I.G. Starinov was brought to work in the Comintern system. There he taught mine-

blasting and the specifics of partisan actions in highly classified educational institutions of the Communist International. More than once, when I was just a boy, I accompanied my father on weekend trips to such schools. Usually we went out with the whole family, but at the gates of these establishments, my

mother and older brother were taken out of the car for a walk in the forest, and my father took me with him, believing that I was still small and did not understand anything. One of these special schools was then near Moscow in Balashikha. Its head was Karl Karlovich Walter, later

illustrious General of the Polish Army Karol Swierczewski (1897–1945). "Walter" was his party pseudonym. It was in this special school that I first saw the teacher of subversion, I.G. Starinov. But then I didn't know that. He was always, like all the other instructors of this special school, dressed in civilian clothes. But once in my father's office in Moscow on Mokhovaya Street in the building of the Comintern, I saw him in military uniform, in the buttonholes of his tunic there was one sleeper - the captain. Later I learned that at that time his rank was a military engineer of the 3rd rank.

Many years later, after the end of World War II, I was lucky to meet Colonel I.G. Starinov personally. When he learned that I was the son of Osip Pyatnitsky, he told me much of what he knew about my father's work and about the Comintern military-political special schools where he had to teach. He said that in a short period of time he managed to train two groups of Chinese and familiarize the party leadership of the Communist Parties of some foreign countries with the tactics of guerrilla operations, the specifics of sabotage work and the use of mine blasting equipment. In particular, Wilhelm Pieck (Germany), Jacques Duclos (France), Antonin Zapototsky (Czechoslovakia), Palmiro Togliatti (Italy) and some others underwent such training.

I met with Ilya Grigorievich every time I had to visit Moscow on official business. At the next meeting, he regretted that "it was in Moscow that he realized that preparations for a future war were not being improved, but were being gradually conserved." In 1933, Starinov entered the

Leningrad Military Transport Academy named after L.M. Kaganovich, after which in 1935 he was appointed deputy commandant of the city of Leningrad. But in November 1936, he was recalled to the disposal of the Republic of Uzbekistan and, after an instructive conversation, was sent to Spain. There he became a Soviet instructor for the Spanish partisans under the names Rudolf and Voldemar. First, he formed a special-purpose battalion (the prototype of the Soviet special forces units) of the Spanish Republican army. This battalion, under the leadership of Ilya Grigorievich, inflicted a series of crushing blows on the army of General Franco, and these blows were always delivered where they were not

waited. They disabled dozens of enemy strategic facilities.

At a critical moment for the republican army, I. G. Starinov saved the southern flank of the republicans from defeat. He also managed to blow up the leadership and headquarters of the aviation division of General Franco's troops. Starinov's saboteurs terrified the rebel troops. Later, Ilya Grigorievich participated in the formation of the 14th partisan corps of the Spanish Republican army.

The basic principle of the actions of the saboteur Starinov was as follows: to inflict damage on the enemy without coming into contact with him. He always adhered to it and taught it to his

students. In November 1937, I.G. Starinov returned to the USSR. For work in Spain, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of War (No. 232).

It was in Spain that Ilya Grigorievich showed what his life's work was - guerrilla warfare. Even the enemies of the Soviet Union understood this, but, unfortunately, the leaders of their own country did not notice.

Meanwhile, a "great

purge" of personnel was unfolding in the Soviet Union. All the most trained leaders of the Soviet armed forces were arrested and shot. There was a systematic destruction of the heroes of the Civil War, all those who defended and approved Soviet power. All of them were accused of espionage, Trotskyism and sabotage. The strategy of guerrilla warfare, at the origins of

which stood I. G. Starinov, with the light hand of the "great leader" Stalin was declared "defeatist", and, therefore, hostile. The "defeatists" were ranked among the enemies of the people.

Most of the students of I.G. Starinov fell under the millstones of the Stalin-Yezhov repressive campaign. He himself did not escape this fate. After all, it was Starinov who was the main developer of the "defeat" strategy, and besides, by the nature of his work, he was closely associated with N.E. Yakir, I.P. Uborevich and Ya.K. Berzin, already declared "enemies of the people." But soon he was released from custody. There was a rumor that the People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov himself stood up for him and asked Stalin for his release.

During this period of time, Stalin put forward a new slogan, which was immediately voiced by Voroshilov - "Beat the enemy on his territory."

Under it, a new military doctrine was urgently developed. The disarmament of fortified areas began along the entire length of the Western border, prepared partisan bases, equipment depots and personnel of the command staff of future sabotage and reconnaissance groups and detachments were destroyed. "If this had not happened," Ilya Grigoryevich

believed, "the liberation war of the Soviet people would have ended at the end of 1942 and with much fewer losses." Stalin never admitted his own mistakes. Others have always paid for them. An illustrative example

of this is the execution of the leadership of the Western Front, headed by Army General, Hero of the Soviet Union D.G. Pavlov (1897–1941). Apparently, the same fate awaited the leadership of the Southwestern Front for the surrender of Kyiv, if its commander, Colonel General M.P. Kirponos (1892–1941) did not die in this battle. So the mistakes of the country's leadership turned into a tragedy for the whole people and, in fact, were a cruel crime against their Fatherland. By the way, Starinov was an opponent of the so-called "rail war". He argued that it was necessary to destroy the locomotives, which the enemy did not have enough, and not the railway tracks, because the Germans easily and quickly restored them. Their

supply of rails was huge, because they captured all the warehouses of rails abandoned by the retreating units of the Red Army. He argued to the leadership that a large amount of explosives, so necessary to solve other, more important problems, was wasted on the "rail war".

tasks.

In 1940, Starinov was transferred to the Main Military Engineering Directorate of the Red Army as the head of the department of minefields (he held this position until 1942), where under his leadership various models of explosive devices and fuses were created, a methodology was developed for their use in various conditions dictated by the situation. In August 1942, I.G. Starinov was appointed commander of the 5th separate special

forces brigade of the Kalinin Front. At the same time, he was in charge of the Higher Operational School for Special Purposes at the TsSHPD.

At the end of 1942 in Kharkov, under the direct supervision of Colonel I.G. Starinov, a unique operation was carried out, as a result of which, with the help of radio-controlled land mines, the headquarters of the commandant of Kharkov and the commander of the Kharkov group of Germans were destroyed. At the same time, the commander General von

Braun himself died. There is a version that when Hitler was informed about this, he was surprised that the Russians had radio-controlled mines at a time when Germany did not have them, and demanded the name of the person who led this operation. The head of the Abwehr, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, allegedly named him the name of Colonel Starinov and Hitler ordered him to be destroyed[13] .

In 1943, Ilya Grigorievich was transferred to a new job. He became deputy chief of staff of the partisan movement of Ukraine Strokach for sabotage work. He remained in this position until 1945. I.G. Starinov was convinced that

Marshal G.K. Zhukov, having become the Deputy Supreme Commander of the Red Army, as well as the General Staff, practically did not control partisan operations behind enemy lines. They never understood the strategic goal of guerrilla warfare, which was to cut off enemy troops from their sources of supply.

After the end of the Patriotic War, I.G. Starinov was sent to work at the Higher School of the KGB, where he headed the department in his main specialty. This school was located in Balashikha, near Moscow, in the very place where in the early 1930s there was a special school of the Comintern. It was in the Balashikha special school of the KGB that the foundation was laid for our famous special forces units "Vympel", "Alpha", "Zenith", "Tashkent" and others. Unfortunately, this elite educational institution was liquidated in 1992 by order of the then chairman of the KGB Bakatin, and most of its graduates were dismissed. The leadership of our country has changed frequently.

People came to power who did not understand this issue, and many others. This is the reason for many of our misunderstandings that have occurred in recent years.

In 1956, 56-year-old Colonel I.G. Starinov retired. Until the last day of his life, he remained the oldest colonel in the world. He held this position for 62 years.

"Why?" the reader will ask. Because he always and under all circumstances defended his own opinion, which pissed off his immediate leadership and top management. As a result, Colonel I.G. Starinov, whom many called the "genius of the mine war", "saboteur of the century" and "father of the Soviet special forces", did not receive the rank of general. And he was nominated for the title of Hero of the Soviet Union three times, but each time the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks rejected these submissions. In the life of I.G., Starinov was very modest, purposeful, disinterested and principled. He always defended his opinion with a certain persistence, even if it differed from the opinion of his leadership. Therefore, he was objectionable to the authorities. He did not lose a single duel with the enemy, but was defeated by the leadership of his own country. Today only a narrow circle

of military specialists knows about it. Noteworthy is the story of the editor of his "saboteur" Erkebek Abdulaev. Here's what he told readers:

"For many years, after returning from hostilities, I have been running to Ilya Grigorievich to discuss the details of some special operations carried out and listen to his advice. So, at the end of January 1995, completely excited by what I saw in Grozny, I came to "Grandfather". After carefully listening to my sad story, Ilya Grigorievich remarked: "If the Chechens had mastered the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare, the results would have been much more deplorable. The trouble is, our self-righteous generals don't seem to have a clue about it either!" Colonel Starinov had many military

orders from the Land of Soviets, as well as orders from Spain, Poland, East Germany, Yugoslavia and other countries. But he only wore those that he really considered awards. It is interesting that he wore the medal "For the Victory over Germany in the Patriotic War" with the back side forward, and he sawed off the bas-relief of Stalin, which is located on its front side, with a file with his own hands. This speaks volumes. Colonel I.G. Starinov could not forgive Stalin for the death of the best sons of the Fatherland, and in this I fully agree with him.

Ilya Grigoryevich Starinov passed away in November 2000 at the age of 100. I

took the liberty of making this small digression from the topic touched upon with a story about the master of sabotage I.G. Starinov, since it complements the question I raised about the preparation of the USSR for a guerrilla war and about the specifics of sabotage work behind enemy lines.

Chapter

6 Astrakhan sabotage and reconnaissance special school No. 005

The situation in the Stalingrad and Astrakhan directions of the Soviet-German front (November-December 1942)

Let's continue the story about the sabotage and reconnaissance special school

No. 005. Our instructor in mine-blasting was Lieutenant Israel Arkadyevich Fridman, a "shirt-guy", one of the best students of Colonel I.G. Starinov. He knew how to get from each of us a perfect knowledge of this difficult craft. We were told that the massive use of

mines behind enemy lines undermines his morale, sows panic and uncertainty in his ranks.

The demolition program included the study of several designs of mines and fuses, as well as tactics for their use in various conditions. We used ordinary tension mines together with an explosive charge weighing 75, 100 and 200 grams, depending on the task, and with a total weight of up to 5 kilograms. In this case, fuses VP-F and MV-5 were used. The technology for the installation of such mines provided for

the preparation of a hole in the ground 30-50 centimeters deep, into which one or more thick pieces should be laid. But in practical classes, instead of scarce tol, we usually used

melinitis or ammonal.

A fuse is inserted into one of the thick checkers, into the collet of which a thin stick or the lower part of a reed stalk is inserted, to which a gray thread is tied - to match the color of the environment. The hole is covered with earth or sand, and if there are stones nearby, then the hole is laid with stones. This greatly enhances the lethal force of the mine. The thread released from the hole is pulled across the path or road along which the vehicle or patrol must pass.

enemy. The end of the thread is tied to a peg driven somewhere on a hill on the other side of the path or road. Then the stop stick is removed from the fuse and the mine is ready for use.

In the same way, we installed anti-personnel and anti-tank land mines, for example, stone-throwing ones. In Kalmykia, before the war, repairs were carried out on the main grader highways; for this, cobblestone was imported and piled along the roads. Friedman taught us to use this circumstance. To do this, in a ditch dug along the roads, a well-pit is made, in which one side is flat, the one that faces the road. The procedure for laying the landmine was the same as above. Explosives were placed in the well and covered with cobblestones, then disguised as heaps of stones nearby and all this was covered with weeds. We were told that one of the previously abandoned groups laid a similar landmine, which ran into a squadron of Cossacks. The first horses passed quietly, but when in the middle of the squadron one of the horses touched a thread and a landmine went off, the result was terrible. Cobblestones literally crushed horses and

people. The news of this spread throughout the district, after which the enemy mounted patrols and carts began to travel across the steppe next to the roads. Then our saboteurs changed tactics and began to make a sloping wall of the well away from the road. And everything happened again. They also introduced us to fragmentation-barrage mines, which

were also used as anti-vehicle weapons.

We also studied guided mines, which consisted of explosives with an MCHB fuse inserted into it, the pin of which could be pulled out at the right time by a wire tied to it. But basically our attention was turned to pressure mines and to the design of fuses activated with a fuse cord. Unfortunately, there was nothing more complex and progressive in the arsenal of our special school. There were not enough even simple matches and gray threads for stretch marks. The commanders of the emerging sabotage groups, furtively from the leaders of the school, bought them at the Astrakhan bazaar.

Particular attention in our training was given to mastering the basics of tactics of action in the steppe conditions. We were taught to walk across the steppe step by step, so that the enemy, having discovered our tracks, could not determine the size of the group. Moreover, this should have happened automatically, since the eyes were busy with other tasks. On the march we went in pairs. At the same time, one looked (led observation) - in one direction, the

other in the other. We learned to work in the steppe, which was as smooth as a table top, to make a fire where a burning match or a lit cigarette could be seen for miles. They taught us how to dig in secretly, disguise ourselves, silently pick up and shoot sentries, throw a Finnish knife and much more, which allowed us to complete the task and

survive on our own. It took a lot of time to study topography, ways to navigate the terrain and the stars, which is not an easy task in the bare steppe. They learned to use captured weapons, since you can't carry a lot of ammunition on yourself, and the provision of groups was very limited. We all

studied diligently, strove to penetrate into everything, to understand, to master all the techniques and instructions, well aware that the fulfillment of a combat mission and our life depended

on it. Until now, I remember the basics of partisan tactics, succinctly formulated in the notes of Ilya Grigorievich Starinov: good reconnaissance, maneuverability, the ability to use modern means of war, primarily mine-blasting equipment, knowledge of the terrain quickly, ability to concentrate on striking, immediate dispersal after the it and the exit of the group from the battle, mutual support and fortitude in battle. We were taught the ability to quickly and dramatically change

tactics depending on the conditions of the battle and the situation, because the enemy is strong, but prone to stereotyped actions. We were not supposed to take a frontal blow from superior enemy forces. We were instructed, constantly maneuvering, to unexpectedly appear behind enemy lines, impede his communication and supply, and exhaust him with sudden blows.

You can't stay in one place. It is necessary to move and conduct military operations only at night, and in the daytime to sit somewhere in shelters, observing disguise. How

one can be more cunning, ambush and destroy the enemy without coming into direct contact with him. In November, the Soviet

Information Bureau transmitted a message about the beginning of heavy fighting in the direction of Nalchik - Ordzhonikidze (Vladikavkaz).

The situation at the fronts was very difficult, it depressed all the inhabitants of our special school. We noticed that some kind of fuss was going on in our midst, we guessed that regular groups were being formed to be thrown behind enemy lines. This was not officially announced. But the comrades who were on duty at the special school informed each other about the departure of the next groups. All classes in our special

school were conducted mainly in conditions close to the future combat area and in any weather. For this, we were taken out of the city every day. This is where the training took place.

After the end of the school day, and it lasted from early morning until late at night, after dinner, we usually gathered in a large room called the club. There, with bated breath, they listened to the reports of the Soviet Information Bureau, from which they learned that our troops fought stubborn battles in Stalingrad, in the Caucasus on the passes of the main Caucasian ridge, near Nalchik and Grozny. From time to time there were reports about the struggle of partisans in Belarus, in the Bryansk forests, in Yugoslavia, about the actions of the French "maquis" (partisans). Sometimes we were shown old movies. There were also dances. This relieved the stress of the day. Everyone was looking forward to being sent on missions, they firmly believed in our victory. We knew that difficult days were ahead, and not each of us would be able to live to see the end of the war. But no one doubted the final victory over the Nazis.

On one of the first days of November, we were returning from classes on foot, moving in formation along the carriageway of city streets, two in a row. Foreman Chernyakhovsky joined me in a couple. I noticed how he deliberately pushed aside Fedya Voronin for this, with whom we always went in pairs. At first they walked in silence. Then he spoke to me. He asked what was broadcast on the radio in the morning. I answered. He explained that he had been summoned to headquarters in the morning and had missed the Information Bureau

report. We have discussed this issue. Then he began to ask about life in the orphanage, about how in the village where our orphanage was located, the Cossacks m

about the beginning of the war, about how I got into the army. The questions were unobtrusive, but showed that the foreman knew my profile well. We talked like old friends. The road was long, it took about an hour. Then he became interested in the reserve brigade and what I did there. The questions they asked were arranged in a certain system. I realized that he was probing me, and began to be careful. Then he said that he

was entrusted with the formation of a group and I was recommended to him by the leadership of the special school. He began to ask me about the program of the regimental school (training battalion), which I completed in the reserve brigade, about what machine gun systems I know.

I said that I studied there for about a month, that I know the Maxim machine gun to perfection, Degtyarev's handbrake "DP" is somewhat worse, since we were specialized in machine tools, that here in a special school I studied the German machine gun MG-34 and I really liked it, reliable construction. I told him that I did not participate in serious battles, I was only in the fighter detachment of my area, which had to fight with bands of Cossacks and German paratroopers. With a fighter detachment and a regional leadership, I retreated from my village to Makhachkala, at that time there were several skirmishes with paratrooper saboteurs, but most often with Ingush and Chechens, who often fired on columns of retreating troops from ambush. Then the foreman asked me directly, looking

intently into my eyes, whether I agree to go on a mission as part of his group? I agreed without hesitation, but asked to take my friend Fedya Voronin into the group. The foreman began to ask about him, and then bitterly said that we should turn to the head of the school about this ourselves, and added that he was unlikely to be given two senior sergeants.

After dinner, Fyodor and I discussed the foreman's proposal and decided to officially ask to join Chernyakhovsky's group. The next morning, after breakfast, we went to the headquarters and, as expected, turned to Alexei Mikhailovich Dobroserdov. He was not alone; a civilian-looking elderly man was sitting near his table. We often saw him next to the foreman. Then they found out that he was the commissioner of his

groups. The people around him simply called him Maksimych, his last name was me. did not know then.

When we said why we came, Dobroserdov asked why we want to go together? We answered that we knew each other well, and in difficult conditions it is always more reliable to have a friend close by whom you know well. The commissar asked why we want to get into Chernyakhovsky's group? We replied that we really like the foreman, and it doesn't matter which group we are enrolled in, as long as we hurry and together. Alexei Mikhailovich told us what he would think about and, pointing to the door, added: "Go,

your guys have already had breakfast and are waiting outside. The car has arrived, it's time to go to class." A couple of days later, the foreman called me aside and said with regret that they would not give a machine gun to his group, so the question of Fedor and me disappeared by itself. And he added: "It's a pity, I liked you, sergeant."

A couple of days later, before November 7, we noticed that a group of faces we knew went into the second meal shift. We realized that an order had been issued to form a new group. It soon became clear that this group was foreman Chernyakhovsky. Orders on the creation of

sabotage and reconnaissance groups were not posted at the operational information stand. They were usually read out before the formation of only the group itself, assembled in the headquarters. The order indicated its personal composition, leaders, assigned number and code name. The area of forthcoming actions and the specific task were reported only to the commander, commissar and deputy commander for intelligence. And only the commander and the radio operator knew the code for radio communications.

In mid-November 1942, on a mission behind enemy lines were five sabotage and reconnaissance groups were sent at once.

November 4 - group number 71 "Manji". Commander Bataev, 13 fighters. The scene of action is the area of the road connecting the khotuns Shatunovsky - Umantsevo - Sadovoye - Kiselevka On the

same day - group No. 73 "Kechkeners". Commander Khartsakhaev, 15 people. She was given an area of action on the road connecting the Khotuns Buru-Kechknery-Shebenery-Sorakh. November 14 group number 74 "Yusta".

Ogir commander, 17 fighters. Action area on the Yashkul-Yutta road. november detachment under

command of A.M. Fedorenko (31 fighters) to the area of the Yashalta-Kista road and the railway in the Ipatovo-Divnoye section, with the task of paralyzing the enemy's transportation along dirt and railway roads [14] . At dawn on —

November 17, 1942, the sabotage and reconnaissance group No. 66 "Maxim" under the command of foreman L.M. left the special school. Chernyakhovsky.

On that day, I was an assistant on duty at a special school. Every day, two sergeants from among the cadets were on duty at the school, one of them was an assistant. Alexei Mikhailovich called me and ordered me to accompany the Maxim group with him to the military harbor, which was located on the outskirts of Astrakhan. The fighters of the group plunged into a truck covered with a tarpaulin, and no one uttered a word until the destination. Dobroserdov was sitting in the driver's cab, I was in the back, between the commander and the commissar.

Comrade Altman, a representative of the military department of the Kalmyk regional party committee, met us at the pier. Subsequently, I had to meet with him more than once. The group unloaded from the truck and, led by the deputy commander for reconnaissance, silently began to climb the ladder of the military boat. And Dobroserdov, the group commander, the commissar and Altman stood at the ladder and talked about something, probably the group command received the last instructions from the leadership. Finally, Chernyakhovsky and the commissar of the group, together with Altman, boarded the boat and set sail from the harbor, heading up the Volga to their destination. For a long time I remembered Sergeant Chernyakhovsky. Standing at the stern of the boat, Leonid Matveyevich waved his hand to me and

shouted: "Good luck to you, sergeant." And Dobroserdov and I silently returned to the location of our special school,

and each of us thought about his own. The group of L. Chernyakhovsky crossed the front line on the night of November 18 and soon went to the assigned area of action, to the Zavetnoye area, but at the end of November she was ordered to redeploy—

to the Proletarskoye-Kuberle area [15] . From the last radio message from the group, it was known that it had gone to the area of the Upper and Lower Zundovy farms and settled on the banks of the Manych River. But this happened in early December. On this connection with the Maxim group was interrupted

conserve radio transmitter batteries. After all, their supply was strictly limited, and ahead was the unknown. The

sabotage groups sent behind enemy lines sank into the water. As a rule, radio contact with them was maintained for three to four days and then cut off. Alexei Mikhailovich called the intelligence department of the headquarters of the 28th Army every day with the same question: "Is there anything for us?" The answer almost always followed: "nothing has been received for you!". Most of the groups abandoned in the occupied territory never re-established contact with the headquarters of our special school. But I

learned the details about the hostilities and the fate of these sabotage groups much later, working with archival materials from the Central Party Archive and from the Special Party Archive of the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic. I didn't know the people in these

groups very well. In the special school, we kept ourselves apart, within our study groups. The leadership did not encourage closer relations between cadets of different groups. It feared that in the event of the failure of the group and the capture of one of the fighters, they might blurt out too much under torture. From this followed the basic rule: to know only what is necessary to perform tasks.

Until recently, there was a belief that in the steppe conditions it is more difficult for large detachments to hide than for small groups. Later life proved that this opinion was erroneous.

After the end of the war, the opinion was intensively cultivated that the entire indigenous population of Kalmykia was among the traitors to the Motherland and served the Germans. This, too, was not true. So, according to official documents, out of 220 people abandoned behind enemy lines by special school No. 005 by mid-November 1942, 125 people were Kalmyks[16] — .

The Patriotic War divided all the nations of the country into "us" and "them". At that difficult time for the Motherland, all evil spirits surfaced. It has been known for a long time that shit always floats on the surface. This fully applies to the Russian nation. Examples of this are the Vlasov ROA, the 15th SS Cossack Corps and other military units of traitors who faithfully served the German Nazis.

This phenomenon did not bypass the Kalmyk nation. The Kalmyk Legion, which helped the Germans fight partisans and sabotage groups in the Kalmyk and Salsky steppes in the Astrakhan direction, as well as many scattered groups of Kalmyk servants to the German invaders, at the beginning of 1943, when the Germans formed the 1st Cossack division, became part of it as a Kalmyk shelf. This regiment consisted of two divisions, four squadrons each. This fact is confirmed by the chieftain of the Kuban army, Major General Vyacheslav Naumenko, who was one of the founders of the 1st Cossack division of the German army.

Soon after the territory of Kalmykia was liberated in February 1943, the Stalinist leadership repressed the entire republic. The autonomy was liquidated, the population was forcibly taken to Kazakhstan. Only in 1957 were the Kalmyks rehabilitated. As you know, in exactly the same way, Stalin in 1943-1944. acted with the Ingush, Chechens, Kabardians, Balkars, Karachays, Crimean Tatars, and the Volga Germans. But I digress from the topic.

The formation of partisan detachments and sabotage reconnaissance groups in our special school, as I said above, took place covertly. It was not clear to us, the cadets, on what principle this was done. First, there were individual interviews. One or the other cadet was taken aside by one of the senior comrades, asked about relatives, about school, about previous life, about views on the situation in the country. Then one day in the morning, after breakfast, the school duty officer announced the names of the cadets who should have come to the headquarters. There they were read an order to enroll in such and such a sabotage and reconnaissance group, introduced to its commander and commissar. In the same place, each fighter of the group read out, printed on a piece of paper, an oath - a partisan oath and put his signature on it. At the same time, fighters

sent to a special school from army units and who had already taken an oath of allegiance to the Motherland in their units were not exempted from the procedure for taking a partisan oath. From the moment the order was

announced to form a group, all its fighters were placed in a separate room and for several days, sometimes a week, they lived there, getting used to each other. There was a formation

combat team, weapons and equipment were selected. The commander and commissar continued to get acquainted with each fighter, distributed roles and responsibilities between the fighters of the group, intensively taught them in their own way the individual subtleties of the forthcoming activity.

Then one day, usually at dawn before the general rise, when everyone was still sleeping, these groups disappeared. Sometimes they were taken away in cars, but more often they walked on foot to the Volga embankment. There, from the military harbor, they were transported to the other side in the area of the village of Trusovo, or they were sent on a military boat along a given route.

We noticed their absence from the empty seats in the dining room. The vacated seats were immediately occupied by new arrivals, and this procedure was repeated again and again. Dismissals

to the city, that is, outside the territory of the special school, were rarely given to us, mostly only residents of Astrakhan to visit relatives. The rest, residents of other places, it was believed that there was nothing to do in the city. But still, sometimes we also happened to get out of the school fence, either with a package to the headquarters of the 28th Army, or to the regional committee of the party or the Komsomol. In addition, every week in formation we visited the bathhouse

nearest to us. When we were in the city, we saw that Astrakhan was preparing for defense. After all, the city was filled with troops. It continued to form units of the 28th Army, whose headquarters was in the city Kremlin. The city and especially the port were bombed from time to time by enemy aircraft. There was also a female contingent in the special school, mostly girls of our age. We were seriously interested in this "contingent". But we were pulled back by the command, warning and reminding us that flirting and love were forbidden at school. The girls lived in a

separate one-story outbuilding, and for us guys, the road there was categorically closed. The girls were trained in radio engineering, medicine and subversive work. There were also several snipers among them, some of whom we sometimes met on classes.

There were several groups in the special school, but we kept to ourselves. After all, we were already soldiers, and most of the cadets were from civilians. I became very good friends with my former commander Fedya

Voronin. All the time, both in class and on vacation, we tried to be together.

Earlier, at the regimental school in the 28th reserve brigade, he taught me to shoot. Therefore, I was very worried when I, his former student, wiped his nose at the shooting range in front of the whole group. Shooting from a German machine gun MG-34, I wrote out my name - "Vova" on the shield with bullets. When this reached the authorities, they made me repeat it, but this time at a paper target pasted on a shield, and they gave me a Degtyarev machine gun in my hands. The authorities stood behind, of course I was nervous. But on the command "plea" in short bursts, he destroyed the entire black circle of the target. After that, I was thanked and released from further shooting training.

So it went day after day. Time flew by quickly and surprisingly imperceptibly. November has passed into the second

half. Meanwhile, the situation on the southern sector of the Soviet-German front was becoming more and more complicated every day. Back in mid-September, the tank army of Colonel General Herman Goth approached Stalingrad for 40 kilometers. At the end of September 1942, Lieutenant General Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovsky (1896–1968) was appointed commander of the Stalingrad Front.

In mid-November, the 11th Army, Field Marshal. Erich von Manstein (1887–1973) was transferred from the Volkhov sector of the Leningrad Front to Stalingrad. Hitler ordered him to take over the sector of the front on both sides of Stalingrad. On the basis of the Headquarters of his 11th Army, the Don Army Group was created, which was supposed to save the encircled army of Paulus. Fierce fighting near Stalingrad took place from 19 to 23 November. By November 24, the encirclement was so thin that it was not difficult to break through it. In response, the Soviet command threw its mobile army along the

lower reaches of the Don to Rostov-on-Don and cut off Army Group A. General Hoth was instructed to release the encircled 6th Army of General Paulus. The

Goth tank group managed to advance deep into the encirclement and reach the Myshkova River near the village of Gromoslavka. But here, just 40 kilometers from the inner bypass

encirclement, it was stopped by the 2nd Guards Army of General R.Ya. Malinovsky (1898–1967).

Details about this episode will be discussed below. In mid-November, Colonel-General Ewald von Kleist was appointed commander of Group A instead of Field Marshal von Bock, and his troops approached Rostov-on-Don. On November 20, the Stalingrad Front joined the offensive operation. During his offensive, the army of Colonel-General Gott, together with the remnants of the 4th Romanian army, were thrown back from Stalingrad and ended up south of the outer ring of encirclement.

At the same time, units of the 28th Army, behind the defense zone of which we were to operate, attacked the enemy and broke through the defense line of the Germans, who had begun to retreat. But at the turn of Chilgir - Yashkul they managed to stop the offensive of the Soviet troops. In mid-December, Manstein launched an operation to free the encircled army of Paulus. The plan for this operation was called "Winter Thunderstorm".

The headquarters of the German High Command included in the army group "Don" over 30 divisions, which deployed along the front from the village of Veshenskaya to the village of Proletarskaya. She was instructed to save the army of Colonel General Paulus surrounded in Stalingrad. As I said

above, the tank army of Colonel General Goth was also included in the Don army group, at the head of which was the Viking SS motorized rifle division. The tank army of Hoth was instructed to break through the corridor into the "cauldron" of the encirclement of the army of Paulus.

I believe that without this historical background, it will be difficult for the reader to understand the situation on the southern flank of the Soviet-German front, in which the fighters of the sabotage reconnaissance groups and partisan detachments of the southern department of the TsSHPD, including graduates of our special school, had

to operate. One day at the end of November, when after breakfast we lined up in the school yard, an excited Alexei Mikhailovich suddenly jumped out of the headquarters and, calling the duty officer to him, asked where his assistant was hanging out. He replied: "You yourself sent him to the headquarters of the 28th Army with a package." Then Dobroserdov, looking round, saw me and shouted: "Senior Sergeant Pyatnitsky, come to me." I'm out of order

stretched out in front of him. He briefly said: "Follow me." I asked him: "Take a weapon?". He waved his hand and ran to the gate, I followed him.

In the street outside the school gates were two trucks covered with tarpaulin. We settled into the cabs and immediately set off. Having passed through the city, we stopped at a civilian pier. There, surrounded by a detachment of the commandant's company, there were about 50 armed people. They were a very colorful group - all in old burnt padded jackets, in torn boots, many of the soles were tied with ropes or telephone wire. Among them were the wounded and, as it turned out, the sick.

Alexei Mikhailovich, jumping out of the car, rushed to these people. They hugged, shook hands, some cried from the joy of meeting. These were two reconnaissance groups abandoned behind German lines in early October. They were the first of all those abandoned behind enemy lines who managed to return from the German rear to their territory. Communication with them was lost, we considered them dead.

Dobroserdov called the commander of the commandant's outfit, who surrounded the pier, to him, explained to him that these were reconnaissance groups that had returned from the mission, and asked to remove the cordon. Then, yelling at me for standing idle, he ordered the wounded and sick to be loaded into the first car, the rest into the second. And he went to the commandant of the harbor to contact the intelligence department of the 28th Army. After talking with the leadership of the army headquarters, he approached the cars, got into the one where the wounded and sick were, ordering me to drive the second car to the "location" - to the special school - to feed, wash and change everyone. And he himself took the sick and wounded to the

nearest hospital. They were already waiting there. Groups V.N. Kravchenko and I.N. Chernyshev, only 39 people, were sent to the rear of the Germans on October 12. They were given identical assignments - disorganization of enemy transportation in neighboring uluses and reconnaissance. Both groups were supposed to reach

the Manych River together, and then disperse into the areas assigned to them. Both groups crossed the front line in the area of the 10th siding of the Astrakhan-Kizlyar railway. We moved at night, on foot, guided by the compass and the stars. In the daytime, during daylight hours, they lay down somewhere in a lowland, hiding in a low, sun-dried grass. Moved for almost a month, with

overcoming more than 350 kilometers on a flat, like a tabletop, steppe, destroying small groups and enemy posts along the way. They lost contact with the headquarters, they ran out of food for the radio, food ran out. And in the Kalmyk steppes there is nowhere to get hold of food. It was very difficult with water, in order to get drunk and fill the water supplies, one had to literally fight for access to the wells. On the 22nd day of being

behind enemy lines, the united detachment of V.N. Kravchenko and I.N. Chernyshev near the khotun Shara-Khalstun at the mouth of the Kalaus River came across a German outpost and almost completely destroyed it. Then, after a long night march, having found a shallow hollow, the detachment lay down there for the day, posting guards. The sentries performed their duties in the prone position. After the night battle and the forced forced march, everyone immediately fell asleep. An hour later, the guards raised the alarm. The

detachment was surrounded. Two squadrons of Kalmyk and Cossack legionnaires and a company of soldiers of the 16th German motorized division surrounded the hollow where a detachment of our saboteurs was stationed. For ten hours, the fighters of the combined detachment fought off one attack after another, inflicting significant losses on the enemy. Moreover, only the Germans attacked. Legionnaires surrounded the place of battle in a dense ring to prevent the escape of those who managed to break through. The Germans fired at our guys with machine guns and mortars, then set fire to dry reeds and grass with a flamethrower. When the fire approached the position of the detachment, its fighters, under cover of fire and smoke, managed to break through the encirclement and break away from the enemy. At the same time, the detachment lost two people killed, fo

Try to imagine a battle where 39 fighters fight against a company of soldiers and two squadrons of legionnaires. Left

without ammunition, food and warm clothes, which died in the burning reeds or were destroyed by mortar fire, these groups were able to get to the Manych River, hide in its estuary and, after waiting for darkness, cross to the other side at night. In November, the water in Manych and its estuaries is very cold, and there is nowhere to dry off. Therefore, everyone caught a cold, some very badly. Behind Manych begins the Stavropol Territory. There they met with an equestrian partisan detachment of the Stavropol Cossacks. With their help and under their cover, our guys managed to cross the front line and

get to the Kizlyar railway, where at one of the sidings they found an empty car and in it got to the suburb of Astrakhan, the village of Trusovo. At the pier in Trusovo, they

frightened everyone with their appearance, including the commandant, who mistook our guys for a gang of deserters. In that difficult time, many of them roamed the steppes in no man's land. The soldiers of the commandant's company, seeing a group of ragged armed people in front of them, were very scared. Having let them on the ferry, they immediately contacted the commandant of Astrakhan. That is why at the pier our guys were met by a company of the commandant's reserve raised on alarm. The rest you already know from the previous story.

Information about the actions of sabotage groups V.N. Kravchenko and I.N. I cited Chernyshev according to document No. 136 of January 1, 1943, and according to the stories of

the participants in these actions[17]. The motherland was our common mother, and the mother treats her children in different ways, but at the same time she always remains the dearest creature. Therefore, everything bad that we saw in our country, and we have already learned to notice it, we

perceived as a temporary or erroneous phenomenon. In the special school, I was no different from other cadets. Relations with all were equal and friendly. But age took its toll. There were 20-year-olds among us. They looked down on us young people. After all, most of us were 17-18 years old. But the requirements for everyone were the same, and we, youngsters, often wiped our noses with them due

to our development and education. I developed really friendly relations with Fedor Voronin, my former commander and teacher. He began to fight even in the Finnish campaign. He was silent, gloomy, very strict and persistent. Then I found out the reason for that. He was from a family of dispossessed peasants, originally from Ostashkovo, Tver region, that is, "an atypical Soviet citizen." He hid this fact of his biography and was afraid that if it became known about him, then he would also be repressed as the son of a kulak who hid the truth about his parents. I calmed him down as best I could. But he was silent about his pedigree, colorfully describing life in an orphanage. I very well remembered the instructions of my Komsomol organizer Styopa Kozlov, that "everything that is yours must be carried within yourself and never shake it out."

I was a cheerful, contact guy, I never lost heart, it helped to survive in any situation. But still, thoughts about the fate of the parents appeared often. I remembered my mother less often, but my memory persistently returned to the fate of my father and brother. Especially after failures at the front. I could not understand how it could happen that the Germans ended up near Moscow, Stalingrad and in the Caucasus.

Pictures of the recent past appeared in my memory. I remembered Tukhachevsky, Guy, Kork, who lived in our house, in the neighboring entrances, Berzinya - Uncle Pasha, who often visited our house and in my father's office, Uncle Misha Trilisser, whom I met every weekend in the house rest of the Central Committee in Nagorny [18] These people, familiar and close to -

me, the legendary heroes of the Civil War, were declared "enemies of the people." I could not understand how the people who made the October Revolution and fought heroically in the Civil War, defending Soviet power, turned out to be enemies of this power. But I was still an orthodox communist idea, which absorbed it with my mother's milk - one of the many "Pavlikov Morozovs" who put the interests of the Fatherland above their own experiences. I was raised that way by my parents and the whole environment in which I lived. But something was already happening in my brain. More

and more questions arose, the answers to which I could not find. And I was afraid to share my thoughts with anyone. At that time he himself could not understand them, and this was depressing. The realization of what had happened happened much later. Life itself rolled and polished

my consciousness.

I have already said above that the training of our group of junior officers was carried out at an accelerated pace. We were even exempted from all sorts of housekeeping outfits. We were left with only the night duty at the school and patrolling around the school grounds. I had to be on duty several times at the headquarters of the special school, either as a duty officer or as his assistant. These duties were daily. The attendants were released from their classes, while people engaged in night patrols were not released from classes.

I remember a funny incident that happened to me during the next shift. Once in December, I was on duty at school in a pair

with foreman Misha Burdin. It was a red-haired freckled burly man, a little older than me. He was in charge, I was the assistant. Late in the evening on the day of our duty, Burdin conspiratorially took me aside and said that he had agreed with the girls that they were waiting for us after lights out. A ban is a ban, but life goes on as usual. When the lights out sounded, the authorities dispersed to their

apartments, the special school fell silent, we quietly went into the girls' wing, into the "svetlitsa", as we called it among ourselves. Misha took with him a flask of alcohol. I don't know where he managed to get it. We went into one of the rooms, where the girls were already waiting for us and quietly, as it seemed to us, began to celebrate someone's birthday. As I understood later, it was only a pretext. "After alcohol, we all forgot about time and the ban. The girls blushed, they were half-dressed and available. The blood began to play in our heads. We began to undress. After all, none of us knew what would happen to us tomorrow, we tried to live for today. Many groups abandoned behind the front line immediately disappeared without a trace. Such a fate, obviously, awaited and

us

And in the midst of fun, suddenly the light came on and in. our "svetlitsa" immediately included the entire leadership of the special school. It happened so unexpectedly that we were all taken aback. The girls screamed and covered themselves with blankets. Burdin, as he was without pants, jumped up from the girl's bed, stretching out in front of his superiors. And I instinctively crawled off the bed and darted under it, taking my clothes with me. The beds stood along one wall with small gaps where there were bedside tables, one for two beds.

The chiefs stood in the middle of the room, staring at Bourdin. I, remembering the lessons of special tactics, quietly crawled like a plastuna under the beds until I was behind the authorities at the open door, darted through it and along the corridor I got to the women's toilet. There, having exceeded all the time limits, he got dressed. And at that time I heard the order of the head of the school "come to me!".

Jumping out into the yard and running a little along the fence, out of breath, I ran into the women's building. Nobody slept there anymore, there was a thorough "shmon". They were looking for guys who violated the internal order. I stopped in front of the authorities and reported my arrival. On

the question "where are you hanging out?" he reported that he was checking the outer contour of the special school, that everything was in order there, the patrol was making another round of the territory, there was silence in the barracks. Dobroserdov said indignantly: "What kind of order is this?" and pointed to Misha Burdin. He was already dressed, all red, the color of his freckles, and looked very frightened. Alexei Mikhailovich, turning to me, asked: "how did you hear that I called for support if I was checking patrols on the outer bypass?" Without batting an eyelid, I replied that I was just returning to the school yard and noticed the open door to the women's building. Apparently you forgot to close it. Dobroserdov, of course, knew that I was lying to him, but he swallowed it silently. Then he pointed to Burdin and ordered: "This one is in the punishment cell! I appoint you as responsible duty officer. Carefully check the men's barracks. After breakfast - a common building in the yard! I found myself in a very delicate position. I had to take my comrade to the punishment cell, which
was located under the stairs in a small dark closet in the main building.

In the morning, after breakfast, there was a general formation. The head of the school, in the presence of representatives of the Central Headquarters, informed the lined-up instructors and cadets about the ugly attitude of some, then he raised his voice to the established rules, pointing out the case of unauthorized absences from the location of the special school, and stopped at yesterday's night episode. Misha Burdin stood in front of the formation without a belt, with empty buttonholes. It was cold. I, on duty at the school, stood pulled up next to Alexei Mikhailovich on his left side, in boots polished to a shine, stretched out at attention.

Then Dobroserdov read out the order, which stated that Sergeant Major Burdin had been demoted to the rank and file and expelled to the penal company of the 28th Army for gross violation of the established routine and violation of the order of the head of the special school. Burdin was immediately taken away by the outfit of the city commandant's office, called by the leadership in advance.

After waiting for this procedure to be completed, the head of the special school continued the execution. It was my turn too. He ordered me to stand in front of the line. When I did this, Dobroserdov said that the assistant on duty, senior sergeant Pyatnitsky, had committed the same offense as the former foreman Burdin, but in those

circumstances in which both of them found themselves, was not at a loss, imperceptibly retreated from the room, while demonstrating an excellent knowledge of silent movement in a plastunsky manner, and most importantly, composure and resourcefulness. And this is the basis of action in extreme

situations. Based on this, the leadership of the school and representatives of the Central Headquarters decided to confine themselves to senior sergeant Pyatnitsky with punishment - three days in a punishment cell without release from classes. And for resourcefulness in extreme conditions and at the same time complete composure and self-control to

declare gratitude to him. The decision was unusual, it caused a lot of gossip. Once again, my name was on everyone's lips. I was recognized and remembered by everyone: the bosses, the guys, and the girls. Both of them considered it obligatory to smile and pat me on the shoulder v

Meanwhile, time ran forward, classes continued as usual. The sabotage group of

Ochirov No. 74 "Yusta" returned from the mission. From the moment of the meeting on the Volga coast, the guys from the combined detachment V.N. Kravchenko and I.N. Chernyshev, I became their chargé d'affaires. During their absence, the contingent in the special school changed and they, having not met old acquaintances, felt like strangers in it. On the other hand, having

been in all sorts of alterations themselves, they treated the newcomers with condescension, considering them to be unshot youth, and themselves already experienced fighters. For our group of junior commanders, most of whom had already been in battle, were wounded and had awards, they had wary respect. In the special school there were also other non-commissioned officers sent from the 28th and 51st armies of the Stalingrad Front, but they also kept to themselves. They arrived before us and almost all of them were involved in groups already abandoned behind enemy lines.

But with some guys from the groups of V.N. Kravchenko and I.N. Chernyshev, whom I happened to meet in the military harbor after their return from their mission, I developed a rather trusting relationship. Especially with the guys from the detachment of V.N. Kravchenko. Sometimes they came to me with different questions about the new order,

established in a special school in their absence. From time to time I was instructed to accompany some of them to the hospital, to visit the wounded and sick comrades. Thus began a friendship. After all, with many of them we were the same age. I became

especially close friends with Lesha Vdovin, Boris Britikov, Viktor Aksenov and Vanya Durin. All of them were Astrakhans. I also got to know the leaders of the detachment, Vasily Nikitovich Kravchenko, and Commissar Dorji Goryaevich Goryaev. The commander of the detachment in all official documents and reports was called

with initials, unlike other group leaders, since there was another group commanded by another Kravchenko. They were completely different people both in age, and in experience, and in appearance. The guys from the group V.N. Kravchenko called their commander simply "Batey", and the commander with all the fighters, except

for the commissar and his deputy for intelligence and two or three peers, addressed, calling them not by their last names, but with the same "son" to the guys or "daughter" to the girls. "Bate" at that time was already 55 years old, and for us he really was a "father".

At our first meeting, on the pier in the military harbor, the commander of group No. 55 struck me with his appearance. He somehow reminded me of the then famous V.I. Chapaev. He was of medium height, much taller than his commissar, strongly built, and broad in the shoulders. An astrakhan hat sat firmly on her head, twisted back. He was, like all his fighters, in a burnt padded jacket, and on his shoulders, like a cloak on a Cossack, he was thrown over a canvas cloak, also burnt in several places. But his eyes and half-gray mustache were striking. At that time, they expressed anger and indignation caused by a negligent meeting and the actions of the commandant's outfit. His mustache twitched in time with the swing of his right hand. His mustache always twitched when he was indignant at something. The commander and commissar always went together. They were friendly

even before the war, they worked in the same district - Priyutinsky.

The commissar of the group was a Kalmyk. He had a very complicated name - Dorji-Goryaev Lezhi-Gorya Dorji Goryaevich. But it was not easy to pronounce it, and the soldiers of the detachment called him simply "comrade commissar" or

just "Dorji Goryaevich". He spoke Russian with a slight accent. He was of small stature, strong build, with a very swarthy face and protruding cheekbones. He possessed inexhaustible energy, intervened in all matters relating to the fighters of the group, conquered those around him with fortitude, faith in the coming victory and a burning hatred for traitors.

With the deputy commander for intelligence, Alexander Andreyevich Aksenov, the stepfather of my new friend Viktor Aksenov, I did not have a relationship. He was very arrogant, and looked down on all the youngsters, which made him different from his immediate superiors, commander and commissar. But at that time I did not depend on him and, if possible, tried to avoid contact with him. The guys in the group, addressing him, simply called him "Uncle Sasha", and he called all of them, even his stepson Vitka, only by their last names. With the guys from the group I.N.

Chernyshev, I had almost no contacts. Therefore, I knew this group much worse. At the end of November, she returned

from a task of sabotage
reconnaissance group A.R. Potapov No. 50 "Andrey".

December 1942 came. Here

I consider it appropriate to quote the text of the memorandum of the representatives of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement, sent to the head of the TsSHPD. PC. Ponomarenko, on measures to strengthen the activities of partisans, dated December 30, 1942 (document—

[131](#)) [19]. Since the offensive of the Red Army units, we have carried out the following measures are being

taken: 1. Two new subversive groups (BESPALOV and KRAVCHENKO) have been sent to the Salsk-Egorlykская, Salsk-Kotelnikovo railroad.

2. The group of CHERNYAKHOVSKY was relocated from the Zavetnoye area to the Salsk-Kotel-nikovo

railway. 3. The GOLUBEV, BATAEV and KHARTSKHAEV groups, which remained on the territory liberated by the Red Army units, are now provided with ammunition, food and uniforms and sent behind enemy lines to new areas on the roads Elista - Zimovniki, Repair - Zavetnoye.

4. Reformed and one of these days, upon receipt of weapons, V.N. KRAVCHENKO and I.N. CHERNYSHOV. These detachments are reinforced numerically to 34-35 people and consist of three groups of 10-11 people in each detachment, trained to carry out independent tasks.

5. There are 58 trained saboteurs (four groups) who will be sent behind enemy lines in the coming days upon receipt of weapons.

6. Continues to select people to form new ones
partisan detachments and groups.

Representative of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement
Ryzhikov

Deputy representative of the TsSHPD Shestakov

On November 2, 1942, the sabotage group "Maxim" received an order by radio to block the railway in the area of the Kuberle station. Fulfilling the order, the group of L. M. Chernyakhovsky blew up the railway track under the first echelon of the SS Viking division. The enemy did not expect anything like this and moved in echelons along a single-track railway.

Having blown up the locomotive and the railway track under it, the commander of the "Maxim" managed to transmit a message about this to the headquarters by radio. I already wrote above that our special school used the radio center of the intelligence department of the headquarters of the 28th Army to communicate with sabotage groups abandoned behind enemy lines. Through him, Chernyakhovsky's report was immediately

handed over to the headquarters of the Stalingrad Front. By that time, the tank army of Colonel-General Hermann Goth was reinforced by the 5th Panzergrenadier (motorized) SS division "Viking", which was not part of the Wehrmacht, but was in the reserve of the Reichs Fuhrer Himmler.

The SS division "Viking" was formed by order of Hitler on November 11, 1940. Gruppenführer (Lieutenant General) Robert Gille was appointed its commander. The division included not only Germans, but also volunteers from a number of European countries - the Dutch, Flemings, Danes, Norwegians, Finns. The division was much stronger than any Wehrmacht division. It included in its composition three regiments of motorized infantry - "Nord-land", "Westland", "Deutschland" and an artillery regiment,

battalions - reconnaissance, sapper, communications, tank destroyers, zent artillery division. There were significantly more soldiers and armored vehicles in it than in ordinary divisions. In the tank group of General Goth, the Viking division was the main striking force. In its first echelon, the

Nordland regiment moved. Its commander was Standartenführer (Colonel) Müllenkampf. The regiment consisted of two battalions of light tanks, four battalions of medium tanks, a motorized rifle company, three batteries (anti-tank, field, anti-aircraft guns), had a lot of other equipment. This division and this regiment were supposed to be on the edge of the wedge, with which Field Marshal von Manstein intended to break through the encirclement and release the encircled von Paulus group, now Field Marshal General. The sabotage group of foreman L.M. Chernyakhovsky was ordered to

block the road to this armada. And what could 15 fighters of the Maxim group do against the tank army of General Goth? After all, the entire armament of the group consisted of 6 PPSH assault rifles, 4 rifles, 4 carbines, 2 TT pistols (for the commissar and radio operator), 65 mines, 4500 rounds of all kinds, 40 kilograms of tol and 3 boxes of matches for miners. The Germans unloaded a motorized rifle company with guns and mortars

from the undermined echelon, and an unequal battle ensued. 15 fighters of the Maxim group against a reinforced company of enemy motorized infantry. The fight lasted about an hour. The fighters of the group held out to the last bullet. Among them were killed and wounded. The remaining survivors were taken prisoner by the Germans. They were tortured, hoping to find out where other ambushes were located. Meanwhile, sappers were restoring the blown up track and repairing the blown up steam locomotive. It took over four hours.

The guys were silent. In addition, they really did not know the location of other sabotage groups. Finally, they were lined up in front of the standing train, their clothes were torn off and, to intimidate, they pulled one forward and burned alive with a flamethrower in front of everyone. Then they shot the rest; The guys died in silence . So in-

the steppe under the substation Kuberle on the night of November 2-3, 1942, the sabotage and reconnaissance group No. 66 "Maxim" died, and

our command was

announced Chernyakhovsky's radiogram reached the command on time. The attack aircraft sent to intercept the echelon bombed it all day long on the stretches between the Orlovskaya station and the Kuberle siding bombed them. The SS men had to unload in the field and move on their own. This took four

days. I repeat that in this way 15 fighters of the sabotage reconnaissance group "Maxim" detained the Goth army group for four days. And in a war, four days mean a lot. During this period, the command of the Stalingrad Front pulled up reserves and organized a solid defense. And there, in the area of the Myshkov River, the army of Goth was stopped by the 2nd Guards Army of General R.Ya. Malinovsky. No more than 40 kilometers separated the Germans from the encircled army of Paulus in Stalingrad. The tank wedge, with which General Field Marshal Manstein hoped to break through the defenses of the Soviet troops and free the encircled army of Field Marshal Paulus, was chopped

off. These

heroes are: Chernyakhovsky L.M. born in 1914 - commander. Bykovsky V.M.

born 1913 - commissioner. Soldatov V.Ya. born 1921

- Deputy intelligence commander. Kiselev SM.

born 1922 - demolition worker, Komsomol

leader. Kulkin N.S. born 1923 - sniper

demolition. Lungor N.S. born 1923 -

sniper demolition. Sidorov I.R. born

1925 - demolition man Klepov I.O. born

1922 - demolition man Vladimirov V.F.

born 1925 - demolition man Anastasiadi

V.F. born 1925 - demolition man

Khavroshin N.F. born 1925 - demolition

man Sharygina N.N. born 1925 -

demolition man Vasiliev P.N. born

1920 - demolition man Pechenkina Z.F. born 1922 - radio operator.

Zaikina V.I. born 1923 - nurse.

Remember their names, dear reader! Twelve boys and three girls, average age 18-19! The former head of special school No. 005, Alexei Mikhailovich

Unfortunately, the Soviet people did not know anything about the exploits of their sons and daughters. Witnesses of their death were only enemy executioners! He called the sabotage group "Maxim" "the bravest among the

brave!" Julius Fucik (1900–1943), journalist, editor of the Czech communist newspaper Rude Pravo, said in his famous book Reporting with a Noose Around His Neck, written by him in the Plötzensee prison in Berlin: "Don't forget! Patiently gather testimonies of those who fell for you and for you! Remember, there should be no nameless heroes! The boiler

operation continued until December 30, it ended with the complete defeat of the group of General Goth. Operation "Winter Thunderstorm" failed, the fate of the army of Field Marshal Paulus surrounded in Stalingrad was decided. heroic

So

ended

epic

sabotage

reconnaissance group "Maxim". But

I could be in its composition if the headquarters of our special school found an opportunity to give her a machine gun. Lucky? There is such a thing - fortune! It was she who led me through the whole war, not letting go of her arms. After all, I went through the entire Patriotic War safe and sound, and at the same time I never hid behind the backs of

others. After the war, my friend, writer and intelligence officer, who graduated from a similar special school with number 003, located in Moscow, told me about the tragic fate of the Maxim group.

Chapter

7 Scout-saboteur O.A. Gorchakov

Here it is necessary to tell about it in more detail. Ovid Alexandrovich Gorchakov. He and I were of the same age, and got to the front as 17 years old. For a long time we were considered the children of "enemies of the people", therefore, we were people of the same destiny, especially in the pre-war years. But, oddly enough, fortune led us along the same path. Both of us in the harsh time of the Patriotic War in different ways got to study in sabotage and reconnaissance (partisan) schools, he was in Moscow No. 003, I was in Astrakhan No. 005. Both at the same time were thrown into the rear of the Germans: I was near Stalingrad in the Kalmyk steppes, he is in the Western direc

But we are talking about Ovid

Gorchakov. He was a man of difficult and wonderful fate. During the Patriotic War, he worked for months in the enemy rear in the occupied territory of the Bryansk and Smolensk regions, in Belarus and Ukraine, then in Poland and Germany. Everywhere he performed special tasks of military intelligence and TsSHPD. He had no right to

use his own name. Even front-line friends knew him only under the pseudonyms Astangov, Kulnitsky, Zubkov or Spartak. In the headquarters card index of the front, he was listed as Spartak. The command highly appreciated his abilities and trusted him with operations of great political significance. One such operation was the transfer of members of the Regional Rada of the People, the future government of People's Poland, across the front line. The Polish authorities appreciated the merits of O.A. Gorchakov, awarding him the country's highest military order - the Virtuti Military Cross. With his exploits, he earned the right to be considered

one of the best scouts of that time. His name is included in the encyclopedia "History of the Great Patriotic War", along with Sorge, Manevich and Kuznetsov, among the ten most prominent fighters of the invisible front.

The Soviet government treated the military merits of Ovid Gorchakov with more restraint. After all, as I mentioned above, the children of "enemies of the people" could not be heroes. But at the same time, after the end of the Patriotic War, he was entrusted with the work as a simultaneous interpreter for Stalin and Khrushchev!

Later, Ovid Gorchakov became a famous Soviet writer. He always wrote about what he himself witnessed and what he himself experienced.

An interesting review of Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky about my friend. He characterized him as "a historian struggling to restore the truth distorted by the 'strategists' from historical science in the years of the recent past." Marshal Vasilevsky further wrote:

"The essay by the writer Ovid Gorchakov, with which the book opens, is one of the first attempts to recreate the image of the revolutionary and patriot Ya.K. Berzin (Chief of the Intelligence Department of the Red Army General Staff, who was shot at the direction of Stalin with the stigma "enemy of the people" - V.P.) - Ovid Gorchakov in his books sought, first of all, to show the origins of the highest courage, ideological strength, heightened party responsibility for the commander, the fighter of the front thunder line You think

about the essay about Yan Berzin, and words are born in your soul with which you want to address readers, especially young ones. In the biographies of the heroes-scouts, the brave sons of the Soviet army and their exploits - the brightest wonderful example for you. In their selfless service to the Motherland, in their self-discipline in life, in their spiritual stamina, try to draw for yourself strength and inspiration.

Ovid Gorchakov died in May 2002 after a long illness. The heart and brain of this extraordinary person could not come to terms with the process of destruction of his Fatherland, to the service of which he devoted his entire conscious life.

At home, his portrait hangs over my desk (a photograph of the late 1980s, where he is depicted in a suit with all the regalia) with a dedicatory inscription: "To Volodya Pyatnitsky, a friend in reconnaissance and sabotage cases in the terrible time of Stalinism, from the penultimate Mohican to the last" . Apparently he already then assumed that he would leave this world before me. Feeling that life was leaving him, he bequeathed to his wife Alesya Vasilievna to cremate

his ashes and scatter the ashes over the forest in the Mogilev region, where in 1942 he began his military activities.

Ovid Gorchakov worked behind German lines on the central fronts. Digging after the war in the memoirs of the surviving Nazis, he found a detailed description of the battle near the Kuberle junction with an unknown partisan group in the book of memoirs of one of the officers of the Nordland regiment of the Viking division.

The heroic death of the L.M. Chernyakhovsky at that time passed unnoticed by anyone. Only in the late 1960s were they posthumously awarded the Order of the Red Star under the pressure of a public campaign raised by Ovid Gorchakov.

He was at that time in favor, and listened to him. And after the publication of his books, monuments to his heroes began to be erected in the USSR and Poland. So, at the Orlovskaya station, a monument appeared with the names of the fighters of the heroic group L.M. Chernyakhovsky ÿ 66 "Maxim". Proud words are engraved on the monument: "They

went to their death, but gained immortality!". So understand, is there objectivity in assessing events and exploits? For example, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was declared a Hero of the Soviet Union for burning down the house of local residents in a village near Moscow occupied by the Germans. On a winter night, she mistook him for the stable of a German wagon train. And what is the difference between the feat of 28 fighters of the 316th Infantry Division, Major General I.V. Panfilov at the Dubosekovo junction from what the guys from the Maxim group did? There are many such examples. Apparently, every time in deciding the issue of an award, the opportunistic

considerations of top management became the decisive argument. After the war, at a meeting with the former head of our special school A.M. Dobroserdov, I asked him this question. And he told me that Leonid Matveyevich Chernyakhovsky was the son of brigade commander Matvey Chernyakhovsky, who was shot in 1937. The reason was precisely this. I myself have encountered her many times. There was Stalin's directive that "the children of the enemies of

the people cannot be heroes, no matter what feat they perform." And he also told me that "he does not know of another sabotage group that would give

Having learned about this from the lips of a man whom I respected and whose opinion I treated with confidence, I understood why I was so drawn to Sergeant Chernyakhovsky, to this silent, proud man.

I remembered how, leaving for a mission, he waved his hand at me and shouted "good luck to you, sergeant!". I think that, like the head of the special school, by my last name he understood whose son I was. After all, many in the party knew Osip Pyatnitsky at that time.

Chapter

8 The sabotage and reconnaissance

detachment of V.N. Kravchenko No. 55 "Avenger" on task

Our group of junior commanders, who arrived from the Transcaucasian Front, had been in the Astrakhan special school for more than a month and a half. If at the beginning of training we studied the issues of sabotage and reconnaissance for 10-12 hours a day, now the emphasis has shifted. Now we were taught how to detect a machine gun by the smoke coming out of a flame arrester, how to distinguish the noise of a car from the noise of an armored personnel carrier, how to use a compass and walk in azimuth in the endless steppe, where there are no landmarks. We were also taught how to remove sentries, how to choose places for

ambushes. But the basis was the tactics of work in the steppe. We were stubbornly trained to walk with full gear, and this is a load of up to 40 kilograms or more, packed in two duffel bags and worn in front and behind, like parachutes plus weapons. Such activities were called physical hardening. They were held every day in any weather, with a daily increase in distance and speed. Gradually, we were drawn into this exhausting drill. The awareness of the need for such training helped. Of course, all the equipment was imitated with sand and rags.

For me, after a training battalion in a reserve brigade, physical hardening was given relatively easily. After all, for days on end I dragged on myself either the "body" or the machine gun "Maxim", and the weight of these parts was similar to our ammunition. But how did the girls cope with such a load? After all, they were driven on a par with us, only in other groups.

A combative optimistic spirit of consciousness of its significance for the fate of the country reigned in the special school. Everyone lived in anticipation of reports from the Sovinformburo. We hardly thought about the upcoming work behind enemy lines, each of us strove to finish our training as soon as

go to the front, not thinking about what awaits him behind enemy lines. They studied sabotage with such zeal as nothing else in their lives.

In the evenings, after dinner, they gathered at the club, then youth took its toll. Watched movies, danced with the girls under the gramophone. With undisguised admiration and sadness, we looked at the groups that went on missions.

One day in mid-December, when all the cadets gathered at the club after dinner and watched the old film "We are from Kronstadt" for the umpteenth time, Viktor Aksyonov squeezed through the rows of sitting and standing spectators to me. Touching me on the shoulder, he whispered that he was calling me "Dad". I did not want to leave the club, I settled comfortably next to one girl who I really liked. But Victor stubbornly pulled me along. We went up to the second floor and, passing a large passage room, which housed the male part of V.N. Kravchenko, went into a small room. There were three beds and a table with chairs. This room housed the command of the group number 55 "Avenger". This arrangement was convenient in that the group's management could freely communicate with their subordinates and observe them.

behavior.

The entire leadership of the group was in the room. Victor was sent out the door, he was considered the orderly in his group, and I was greeted warmly, offered to relax. I really cringed inwardly, feeling that the conversation was going to be serious. From the situation in the special school, we knew that V.N. Kravchenko and I.N. Chernyshov. Similar meetings with other cadets had already taken place earlier in this room and at the headquarters of the special school. Such facts in our midst could not be hidden.

"Batya" suggested that I tell in detail about myself, while warning that the group leadership had already familiarized themselves with my personal file, with the characteristics and results of tests in all subjects, and that the special school management recommended that they get to know me better.

I, as before, remembering Styopa Kozlov's instructions, began to talk about the orphanage, about the extermination detachment, about the retreat across the Kuban and Stavropol, and, finally, about the reserve brigade. I was listened to

carefully without interrupting. When I finished my story, they began to ask me questions. Who are your parents? I replied that I didn't know that I was an orphanage, a "state child", that I had been in several orphanages, in which I don't remember, but the last one was in the village of Voznesenskaya in the Kuban. In it, I was the chairman of the council of commanders, this is according to the system of A.S. Makarenko. He has been in this orphanage since 1939, and before that he was in the Kropotkin colony for the difficult to educate. From there he fled. They caught me in Armavir and brought me to the village of Voznesenskaya. Apparently, the answer to this tricky question satisfied them.

Then came the substantive questions. Which of the guys in our team do I know better, with whom do I communicate, who, in my opinion, is strong in what? Then they began to be interested in my opinion on light small arms, how I feel about German machine guns. Which machine gun is better, Degtyarev or German MG-34? Do I know the structure of the Bromite device? And many, many more questions.

I answered without thinking. He characterized many of the guys from his group. As for the machine guns, I answered that I consider the Maxim system to be the most reliable, that I know it perfectly, but it is very heavy and not suitable for the conditions of the forthcoming work. From manual systems, you should choose those systems for which it is easier to get ammunition, since you can't take much with you. I am familiar with the Bromite silent shooting device. I can take it apart and put it back together with my eyes closed. But I consider it expedient to prepare rubber stoppers for him in advance, since after ten shots they lose their properties. When asked what and how to replace them, he answered that in our conditions it is best to cut them out of the auto-chambers of trucks, it will be worse than standard ones, but better than nothing, that they should be put in two instead of one standard, and that I figured it out myself in class. That the shooter from the "silent" should have pliers with him, with which it is easy to get a bullet out of the cartridge in order to reduce the powder charge in it, because special cartridges for silent are issued in limited quantities.

At the end of the conversation, they asked me if I was ready to go on a mission as part of group No. 55, and if I agreed, then whom I would like to take with me. I agreed and named several names of the guys from our

teams with which he had closer relations, and the first among them was Fedor Voronin. Finally,

"Batya" asked me not to talk about our conversation, and wished me further success in my studies. A few days later, immediately after breakfast, the school duty officer read out a list of cadets who, instead of classes, were instructed to immediately gather in the club. Among the mentioned names were mine and Voronina. This did not surprise us, since something like this was already "hanging in the air." The only strange thing was that they were collected not at the headquarters, but at the club. But soon everything was explained.

There were 38 of us in the club, together with the leadership of the group, not counting the representatives of the TsSHPD. It turned out that only new members enrolled in the detachment of V.N. were announced. Kravchenko, the old fighters were notified in the evening.

When the entire composition of the future detachment gathered in the club and everyone sat along the wall, General Ryzhikov, Major Shestakov, Toritsin and the head of the school entered the club. His deputy I.D. The sleeveless one reported that everyone

was assembled. Then Alexei Mikhailovich made a short political introduction, in which he outlined the military situation in the south of the country and ended with the words that it was time for us to act. The sleeveless one gave the command: "Everyone stand up, line up!" and "Quietly!". Dobroserdov read out an order[21], which said that on the basis of the sabotage reconnaissance group No. 55 "Avenger" a detachment with the same number and name was formed, consisting of 38 people, and he listed everyone by last name. V.N. was appointed commander.

Kravchenko, commissioner D.G. Dorji Goryaev, Deputy Commander for Intelligence A.A. Aksenov, for the material support

of Dziuba. After reading the order, we were asked to sit down, and the head of the school added that, in accordance with the situation in the area of our detachment, its strength was doubled. Three groups are formed in the detachment: intelligence - under the leadership of A. Aksenov; demolition men, commanded by a demolition instructor (unfortunately, I can't remember his last name) and a cover or operations support group, headed by senior sergeant Pyatnitsky.

For me, this came as a complete surprise. In previous conversations with the leadership of the special school, there was no talk of anything like that, and suddenly, I must admit, I was confused, I felt embarrassed, because our team had more experienced and worthy people who had served in the army before the war. But then the following

command followed: "Persons who have not yet taken the partisan oath-oath must do so immediately!" Senior Lieutenant Tishkala called out the names of those who took the oath. Each of them approached the table at which the command sat, took a piece of paper with a printed oath, read it aloud as solemnly as possible, and then signed under it where his surname, name and patronymic were printed. After this procedure, he returned to his place with a marching step. Partisan Oath: I, the

Red Partisan, make my Partisan oath before my fellow Red Partisans that I will be brave, disciplined, resolute and merciless towards my enemies.

I swear that I will never betray my detachment, my commanders, commissars and comrades of the partisans, I will always keep the partisan secret, even if it costs my life.

I will be faithful to the end of my life to my Motherland, to the party, to my leader and teacher Comrade Stalin. "If I break this sacred partisan oath, then let me be severely punished. In which I give my own signature. When this procedure was over,

and the representatives of the TsSHPD left the club premises, the commander and commissar took their places at the table. They reported that we were given very little time to fully equip ourselves, get to know each other and resolve all the necessary issues. A specific launch date has not yet been set.

We were read out the order of the detachment commander on the distribution of fighters into groups. We learned about the presence of a detachment headquarters, which consisted of a commander, a commissar, deputy commanders for intelligence and economic support, and a radio operator. The

girl medical instructor was also included in the headquarters. Next, we were told the tasks assigned to the detachment. They consisted in reconnaissance of enemy units, determining their numbers and numbering, in monitoring th

it was charged with the destruction of communications, the destruction of messengers, patrols and enemy convoys. In all cases, it was necessary to capture documents and find a way to send them to the headquarters of the 28th Army and the partisan movement in the south of the country. We had to destroy the traitors to the motherland, prevent the export of grain and livestock in every possible way, and use the food taken from the enemy to create our own bases and distribute to the population. Completely destroy leftover food.

Then the tasks of each of the groups of the detachment were named. My group was charged with ensuring the safety of other groups during their reconnaissance missions, explosive work, participation in ambushes, and all sorts of other tasks related to the combat situation. The size of this group was the most significant - 12 fighters (I myself was 13th), of which four were sergeants in military service. We were told that

from now on we are switching to a special regime. The location of the detachment is the room that was previously occupied by the Avenger group. Since the room is not enough for everyone, we will each spend the night in our own room, but it is forbidden to tell anyone about what is happening in the detachment. Followed by

questions and answers. We were again warned not to show much curiosity. That everyone learns in a timely manner what he is supposed to know.

After this conversation, the commander suggested that we disperse into groups in the club and get to know each other better. Many I already knew quite well. My group included Alexander Mikhailov, Fedya Voronin, Nikolai Aleksashkin and Alexander Voloshko - all senior sergeants in military service who ended up in the 28th reserve brigade after hospitals. They were older than me and much more experienced. The rest of the fighters of the

group were my peers: born in 1924-1925, from the former group of our commander. They have already been behind enemy lines and sniffed gunpowder in various alterations. These are Viktor Aksenov, Boris Britikov, Lesha Vdovin, Valya Durin, Vanya Moiseev and two girls - Natasha Potapova and Olga Matuzko. Later, medical instructor Raya Tikhonova was also included in my group.

We were transferred to the second shift to eat, as was the detachment of I.N. Chernyshov. Therefore, we realized that they would throw us together.

In the evening of the same day, Viktor Aksenov, who at that time served as a messenger at the headquarters of the detachment, called me to Bata. There, in his little room, all the leadership of the detachment and group leaders gathered. Seeing me, Batya said: "Well, now everyone is assembled, it's time to start our first meeting." Then he said that three days were allotted for preparation. In the morning

after breakfast we will receive ammunition in the warehouse. Grigory Dziuba was appointed responsible for this event. The girls will go first, we have five of them. They are given half an hour. Next in order are the intelligence groups, the demolitionists, and then yours, he turned to me. An hour is allotted for each group. Then everyone goes to their chambers, where everyone has to sort out the received ammunition. We must meet the deadlines, as we are followed by a detachment of I.N. Chernyshov. Each of us received two duffel bags, an overcoat, a wadded jacket, wadded trousers, trousers, a

tunic, boots, two pairs of linen and footcloths, Kalmyk stockings, a hat with earflaps, mittens and woolen gloves. Immediately we tried it all on, exchanging what did not fit. Particular attention was paid to the selection of shoes. What they could, they put in duffel bags, the rest was carried in their hands. In disposition, each dismantled his wealth. After dinner, we went to the bathhouse in formation. They changed linen. The dirty piled up, he was then taken to the laundry. And we, clean, returned to the

location of the special school. Before dinner, uniforms were adjusted, shoes were carefully checked. I asked Sasha Voloshko to show each fighter in his group how to equip their own legs. This required a special skill. First, put on a cotton sock, then pull a Kalmyk stocking over it, very thin made of dried wool, and wrap a footcloth over it. Everyone had to learn how to do it right and quickly. The size of the shoe had to

correspond to the leg, equipped accordingly. Therefore, it was necessary to immediately replace shoes, if necessary. We have long

they explained that the one who incorrectly equips his legs will certainly die in the steppe. In

the evening we again gathered in Bati's room to receive instructions for the next day. The group leaders reported on the receipt and fitting of uniforms. "Batya" ordered each group to

allocate six people tomorrow to receive weapons. We, he said, looking at the list, are allocated one anti-tank rifle with a set of ammunition, two machine guns (one Degtyarev, another captured MG-34) with 10 belts, PPSH assault rifles (1500 rounds per barrel), rifles and carbines (300 rounds per barrel). trunk). As well as three sniper rifles and devices "Bromite" - silencers for them, plus 50 special cartridges with green heads for each barrel. Three revolvers "Nagant" - for the commander, commissar and radio operator.

Tol in checkers of 200, 100 and 75 grams, a total of 200 kilograms, fuses and fuse cord, 350 anti-personnel mines PMD-6 and fragmentation POMZ-2 tension action, and also thermite balls. In addition, three binoculars for commanders, 10 compasses, 10 electric flashlights, 80 individual packages, 8 first-aid kits, matches - a few for smokers, but mostly for demolition workers, sapper shovels. Put everything received in a dedicated room, organize round-the-clock duty at its door. In the evening of the same day, the received weapons were distributed

into groups. My group was given an anti-tank rifle, a captured MG-34 machine gun and 10 belts for it, two sniper rifles with Bromit devices, two carbines, five PPSH assault rifles and the above number of cartridges. Explosives, thermite balls and mines were distributed equally among all the

soldiers of the detachment, including the command staff. Only the radio operator was released from them, carrying a field radio and food for it. The fuses were given only to a group of demolition workers. The next day, the guys under the command of Dzyu-by received

food - dry rations for two weeks and a bottle of alcohol per person. Everything received was distributed equally to everyone.

The rest of the time we were engaged in packing the property into duffel bags and adjusting the cargo of each according to his figure. These are two duffel bags, one contained food, a change of linen and a second pair

footcloths. It was worn in front. The second was much heavier and hung behind. It housed ammunition, mines, explosives and everything else. We learned to quickly take off and put on this load. Everything was done so that under all conditions the weapon was always at hand. The total weight of the equipment reached 40 kilograms. The hardest thing was to crawl with this equipment. But "Dad" made everyone work out this procedure. In the evening, the leadership of the

detachment checked each group in full gear. Each fighter was forced to put on and take off ammunition, lie down, crawl, get up, jump on the spot. In a similar way, the packing of duffel bags was checked.

In the morning of the next day, we changed the lubrication of the received weapon and fired it in the shooting range of the special school. And the reports of the Information Bureau were more and more joyful. On December 19-24, our troops on the Myshkova River repulsed the attack of the Gotha army group, which was trying to release the encircled troops of the 6th Army of Field Marshal Paulus near Stalingrad. On December 22, Field Marshal Manstein withdrew his troops from the Chir River 140 kilometers west to the Taganrog region. By that time, the Red Army had defeated the remnants of the Goth tank group south of the Don and pushed it back to the Sal River. As a result, the Red Army began to approach Rostov-on-Don from the south, having a real opportunity to cut off the withdrawal routes of von Kleist's army from the Caucasus. On December 24, Manstein was forced to withdraw the remnants of Goth's army in order to create

defenses at a new line and cover Rostov-on-Don. On this day, "Batya" gathered us all and declared full readiness. On December 25, at dawn, our detachment was announced to rise and line up in the courtyard of the special school in full combat readiness. At 6 o'clock in the morning, the sabotage and reconnaissance detachment No. 55 "Avenger" on foot left the location of the special school, heading for the military harbor. The ferry was already waiting for us there, and next to it was the head of the military department of the Kalmyk regional committee of the

party, Altman. We boarded the ferry. It was his unscheduled flight. The ferry took us to the suburban village of Truso-vo, located on the opposite bank of the Volga. There, on the quay, the detachment was met by an officer of the reconnaissance department of the 28th Army with two tarpaulin-covered trucks. We

suspense. We drove for two or three hours. The road was very bad. By noon we reached some kind of Kalmyk khotun. They unloaded there. We were taken to the premises of the military unit, fed a hot dinner and ordered to rest until dark. It was planned to cross the front line at night. There was no

continuous front line in the Kalmyk steppe. The 16th motorized division of the Germans was stretched out for a good hundred kilometers, and the steppe was mainly guarded by mounted patrols of Kalmyk legionnaires, Cossacks, and mobile groups of Germans. So, no special complications were foreseen with the crossing of the front line, unless we stumbled upon the beginning of an enemy patrol or its mobile group. We had to cover at least 40 kilometers overnight. Front line scouts will show the place of the front line crossing.

Back in the special school, we learned that a detachment of I.N. Chernyshov. We saw that his fighters received equipment right after us. The general situation in the

zone of operations of our detachment colorfully characterizes the "Prospective plan for the deployment and strengthening of the partisan movement in the western uluses of Kalmykia and in neighboring areas for January 1943", compiled by the Southern Department of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement of the country and the Kalmyk regional committee of the CPSU (b) (document No. 135 of December—25, 1942) [22] . I quote it

in full: 1. In connection with the offensive of the Red Army in the Stalingrad direction, the railways Salsk - Repair, Rostov - Salsk, Salsk - Tikhoretskaya, Divnoe - Kropotkin, as well as improved dirt roads connecting these points between Sals-com. Bashanta and Yashalta. 2. In connection with the liberation of the territory of the Kalmyk ASSR, with the exception of

the Western and Yashalta uluses, the detachments previously operating in this territory shall be understaffed, armed, provided with food and sent to the sections of railways and dirt roads specified in paragraph 1.

3. From those trained and remaining at the school (meaning the Astrakhan sabotage and reconnaissance school No. 005 - V.P.), 85 people form 4-5 detachments and send them to these areas,

setting them the task of advancing ahead of the retreating German units to Rostov and Kropotkin.

4. Through local residents of the liberated areas, establish the location, status and data on the combat operations of the detachments of Kolomeitsev, Yakovlev, Germashev, Lomakin and Gershmyakov.

5. Center for training, formation and dispatch of detachments behind enemy lines (special school No. 005 - V.P.). relocate to the city of Elista, where to relocate also turnouts for communication and for means of support.

6. In the liberated front-line areas, create and train partisan detachments and underground groups, creating a material base for them. Representative of TsSHPD Ryzhikov Secretary of

the Kalmyk Regional Committee of the

All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Kasatkin Deputy.

On December 25, at six o'clock in the evening,

when it began to get dark, the representative of the TsShPD Shestakov raised us in alarm. "Dad" recalled the group commanders to another room, where the leaders of the detachment, the representative of the military department of the Kalmyk regional committee of the party Altman and the captain of the intelligence department of the headquarters of the 28th Army were already there.

When everyone gathered, "Batya" told us that front-line scouts would lead us to the place of penetration behind enemy lines, that more than 350 kilometers on the map would have to be walked to the place of deployment of the detachment, in fact, much more.

The task of the detachment is to disrupt the movement of the enemy on the roads Divnoe-Elista, Elista-Yashkul, Elista-Leninsk. The first road is the shortest connection between the Caucasian and Stalingrad groups of Germans; the second and third roads are the main supply lines for one of the enemy's important front sectors in the Astrakhan direction. We are entrusted here "Dad" repeated the tasks assigned to the detachment, which he spoke about earlier. He further warned that all groups should be ready to leave in half an hour. The march today is going to be serious, at least 40-45 kilometers. If we get stuck on the way, there will be big trouble. He ordered all the flasks to be filled with water, because we were going to the waterless steppe. Drink only on command, no more than two sips. Warn the fighters not to eat too much. It is not recommended to eat before a serious matter, because any wound in the stomach becomes fatal.

Then he ordered the group commanders to check the legs of each fighter, how their footcloths were wrapped. "This," said "Dad", will save you from unnecessary problems on the road. In our conditions - "Dad" raised his voice - worn out legs - death for a person. Next was an instruction to check that everyone's weapons and equipment were fitted. Each fighter must jump so that there is no knock or break. All this had to be done in half an hour. It's good that we have already done all this in advance.

Although we knew that Chernyshev's detachment would follow us, "Dad" for some reason kept silent about this.

Half an hour later, the detachment lined up in the yard. Who is going after whom, it was agreed in advance. The command followed: "Forward! Head patrol at sight distance! Went to full height. The distance between couples is three meters. Twenty minutes later we were met by a front-line reconnaissance group. Her commander, a senior lieutenant, whispered something to Batya, and we moved forward in total darkness. Soon our column stopped. It turned out that we had reached the line of demarcation with the enemy. Front-line scouts showed us the direction of further advance. They stayed and we moved on. Oriented along the azimuth 225. The steppe was bare and smooth, no trees, no bushes, not even tall grasses. From the right, then from the left, flares shot up. First, a pop was heard, then a rocket lit up, illuminating the steppe. Fog prevented

the distance to the missiles from being determined. We fell each time and waited as long as it took the rocket to burn out. Clap - the sound of a shot from a rocket launcher - came three seconds later. In winter, sound travels at a speed of 300 meters per second. We multiply this figure by three and so we determine the distance to the nearest enemy patrol - about a kilometer. The rocket goes out. We get up and move on. This is repeated many times.

They walked, staggering and falling. The load was pulled down to the ground. Intolerable fatigue suppressed everything, even consciousness. Mortal danger weakened the will, but fettered the mind and body. I just wanted to fall down and sleep. The group walked, leaving a clear trail behind them, like a caravan of camels. Salt dew on a salt marsh looks like snow, but it is a crust of salt. Ice. God forbid, if someone twists his leg. After all, you can't take it far on your hands. This will destroy the detachment, it is impossible to leave -

will die. At first it went three hours non-stop. Then "Batya" began to announce stops after an hour and a half of the journey, then every hour. At every stop, everyone instantly fell to the ground. We only had time to catch our breath. I was terribly thirsty. But when some reached for the flasks, the order followed - to drink water only with the permission of the commander and two sips. There is little snow, only the cleanest. Breaks - 20 minutes. Ten hours later, when

"Batya" announced a halt, everyone instantly fell to the ground. "Dad" with Aksenov Sr. circled the location of the detachment, discovered a small lowland, overgrown with feather grass and wormwood, and, having ordered to move there, announced a day. Having conjured over the map, he said that in ten hours we had covered about 45 kilometers. It's not enough, he said. But

this is the first transition, then we will get involved. And now I allow you to take a sip, but, as agreed, no more than two sips and have a bite of a can of stew for two. It is necessary. Then whoever needs it "to vitrue" - the lads to the right, the girls to the left. When you lie down, do not forget to lower your boots. Then he came up to me

and said: "It is necessary to take up all-round defense. Tell me, son, how do you plan to organize it? I reported that I had 13 people in my group, two of them were girls. Khloptsev with me 11 fighters. The defense should be divided into three sectors, so it is easier to review the area, no need to turn your head. The guys will not be able to watch for more than an hour, they will fall asleep. And I have enough people for only three hours of duty. "Dad", putting his hand on my shoulder, said: "You are right, sergeant." He called

the commissar, the group commanders and announced: "All the fighters participate in the protection. Be on time. Everyone lie down in order of duty numbers. Pyatnitsky's group carries out the first shift for three hours, and at this time he is responsible for the situation. Then it is the turn of the demolition group, followed by the reconnaissance group. Responsible - group commanders. The command of the detachment provides general leadership, also for three hours. If everything is clear to

I distributed my fighters by time and review sectors, and I myself took over the first shift. She was the hardest. I wanted to sleep madly, my eyes stuck together by themselves. In order not to fall asleep, I put the machine gun under my forehead, and every time my head went down,

it hit the front sight of the machine gun, from the blow I woke up and crawled around the line of the detachment's all-round defense. This was repeated in all three shifts on duty of my group. After the transfer of duty to the next group, he immediately fell into a

dead sleep. At 6 pm, when it was already getting dark, a general rise was announced. We were allowed to first take off our boots, inspect and rub our toes with snow. The medical officer smeared some kind of ointment on the scuffs, who had them, sprinkled them with streptocide. Then, under the supervision of older comrades, we equipped our legs, put on boots and jumped. Then followed the command to get drunk - again two sips of water - and eat a can of stew for each. We barely made it through. I was very thirsty, everyone froze during the night and shivered a little. Finally, the command

came to put on equipment, jump, and prepare for the march. The head patrol came out, a column of the detachment stretched out behind it. All this was repeated over and over again, without any incidents. So several days passed. We got into the webbing. Tortured, only thirst. She was covered in snow. But he kept only in thickets of feather grass and dry wormwood, although even there he had a bitter taste of grass. So five days passed.

On one of the days, when we were preparing for the next campaign after a daytime rookery, and I went around the security perimeter, I saw that, away from the general location, the detachment leadership was crowded around the radio operator. This has happened before, I did not attach much importance to it. But during the night trip, "Batya" made an extraordinary halt, which was unusually long. Everyone lay down on the frozen ground and relaxed. Suddenly we

noticed that the reconnaissance group and part of the demolition men got up, jumped on the spot, stretching their legs, and under the command of Aksenov Sr. went somewhere into the darkness of the night. Then I realized that a task had been received on the radio. We continued to lie blissfully on the frozen ground, despite the fact that we were shivering from the cold (the air temperature was over 20 degrees below zero). I immediately passed out completely. But then I was pushed aside and called to "Bata". He and the commissar sat aside from the lying guys and talked about something with him. When I approached, "Dad" said: "Son, you have

your group can replace you during your absence?". I called Fedya Voronin. I was ordered

to wake him up and bring him to them. When we both returned, "Batya" ordered Voronin to take over the command of the group during my absence and sent him to perform new functions. He sat me down next to me and began to explain what the task was. He mostly said "Dad", and the commissar sat silently and stared into my eyes, checking my reaction to the words of the commander. The essence of the task was that in front,

about 3-4 kilometers away, there was a small Kalmyk khotun. I was instructed to find him, find out if there were any legionnaires there and immediately return to our camp. "Understood, son?" "Dad" asked me. I was silent. Thoughts were spinning in my head - to go alone, in pitch darkness to find a khotun and check it. It is easy to understand, but how to comprehend?

"Dad" broke my silence with the words: "This is a very difficult task. But half of the detachment left to carry out the task of the center, and no more than 20 fighters remained at my disposal. Therefore, we cannot single out anyone to help you, son. Yes, it's useless. The second person will only hamper you in making decisions in the current situation. He put his hand on my shoulder and added that he and the commissar were confident that I could handle this difficult task. I was silent. And thoughts came into my head, why me, and not someone else? The commissioner

understood my silence correctly. He said; "Senior sergeant, the commander and I have been watching you for a long time, you are the right guy, you can be trusted. Therefore, the commander and I chose you, because you are very good at navigating the terrain in the steppe conditions, even better than the commander and I, and you are not lost in extraordinary conditions. And we really need to know what's going on in this accursed hotun. Guys without hot food and without water for so many days, they can break loose. We need a reliable day. You can do it, Volodya! For the first time in my entire service in the army, he called me by name. "Dad" unfolded the map of the area,

put it on his knees and, highlighting it with a flashlight, indicated approximately our location, the location of the khotun, then asked: "Remember? Then act.

Leave the equipment to your deputy and go ahead. We are waiting for you at

dawn." I gave Fyodor my luggage. He took my machine gun, checked it, slipped me a spare disk for the PCA, pulled out two lemons from his ammunition and put them in my belt, adding them to my two. We hugged, he escorted me to the guard line. And I went

I don't know, dear reader, how you perceive my story, but when I return to that case again, a small shiver breaks through me again. Finding yourself in a difficult situation when your comrades are by your side is one thing. You experience completely different feelings when you are alone in pitch darkness walking into the unknown. To understand it, you need to feel it for

yourself ... I walked. The compass can only tell you the general direction. I followed my intuition. What was I thinking? About nothing. One thought tormented me, where is this accursed hotun? Sometimes he lay down, putting his ear to the frozen ground, and listened to the steppe. Actually, she had a lot to say. But I was a complete layman in this matter. I could hear the sound of forged horse hooves. One thing I realized then, that the ear, pressed to the frozen ground, is then very difficult to tear off from it. Later I noticed

that my right ear was covered in blood, but I did not feel any pain. After an hour and a half of searching, I first heard some noise, then a roar. Felt something was wrong, but too late. A pack of angry hungry dogs was advancing on me. They stopped in front of me ten meters away. I didn't see them, but I heard their angry growls. They must have seen me. I felt a couple of biscuits in my pocket and tossed them aside. The whole pack of dogs rushed after them, a fight arose between the dogs. Then the pack returned to me again. With my foot I felt for some hard object and, quickly bending down, grabbed it. I thought I picked up a stone, but it turned out to be dung, frozen horse shit. It rang in his hands, it was hard as a stone. I threw it away from the angry dogs. All of them immediately rushed to where this dung had fallen, but, having figured out what was the matter, they returned to me. I didn't see them. But an angry growl could be heard from all sides.

I have heard stories of Kalmyks that in winter, in the hungry steppe, packs of dogs attack cattle and people and devour them, gnawing them down to the skeleton. I was very scared, but then I remembered

grenades tucked into a belt. He grabbed one lemon, pulled out the pin, threw it far to the side. The pack of dogs immediately rushed after her. Then I threw another grenade a little away from the first and fell to the ground, covering my head with my hands. There was the first explosion. There was a dog yelp and an angry growl. Then the explosion of the second grenade and everything repeated again. I guessed that the surviving dogs fled.

At the same time, the steppe was deafened by rifle shots and machine-gun fire. It was very close. Lying, spotted flashes of shots. Using them, he also determined the size of the khotun, which he had to find and check. The shelling of the steppe lasted about twenty minutes. I lay, afraid to raise my head. Bullets whistled over me. So, I realized that the task was completed. Legionnaires were sitting in the khotun, according to their shots there were 20-25 people, either Kalmyks or Cossacks. But not the Germans, since the machine gun was ours - Degtyarev. I immediately identified his chirping.

When the shooting died down, I lay still for some time, recovering from what I had experienced. Then, first crawling, then bending over, set off on the return journey. About twenty minutes later I was alerted by some noise. I put my ear to the ground and caught the sound of hooves coming closer. I realized that the legionaries were moving, and right in my footsteps. I recoiled to the side and tried to disguise myself with dried sagebrush. Then he distinctly heard the sound of shod hooves. A squad of legionnaires at a trot galloped past me in the direction of our detachment. I got up and went there

same.

After a while, I heard the rattle of my MG-34 machine gun and machine guns. These sounds said that the legionnaires ran into the guards of our detachment and fled somewhere. A little later, the steppe brought the sounds of battle in the direction where our reconnaissance group had gone. It turned out that I really can navigate in the dark.

Two hours later, I ended up in the place where I left on the mission. The detachment was not there. But on the way to the place of our former camp, I came across several corpses of legionnaires and horses. Bending down, he illuminated the face of one of the dead with a flashlight and made sure that he was a Kalmyk. After searching it, I took the documents and a fine antique dagger, then went up to the dead horse. In the saddle bag I found a bag with wrestlers and a large flask with aryan

(moonshine from sour milk), which he also took with him. Everything indicated that our guards had let the Kalmyks come close to the parking lot and shot them point-blank. There were also wounded, horses and people. I heard their groans, but crawled past, searched the entire parking lot. The detachment was not there and no sign indicating what to do,
Same.

Here I was seized by a real fear, which I had never experienced before. My legs trembled from fatigue, from nervous tension and, of course, from fear. I laid down and dozed off unnoticed. But suddenly some inner voice made me jump up. With a flashlight, I began to examine the ground outside the perimeter of the parking lot. First, I discovered the trail of the detachment to the resting place, then I noticed the traces of the reconnaissance group, leading away from the parking lot to the right. From the footprints of the boots on the icy crust of the earth and the broken stalks of dry sagebrush, I knew that she had returned from a mission. Then I saw my footprint. It turned out that I instinctively went back to my own trail. And this is in total darkness! It helped me navigate the area. Examining it further,

I found a trail of the detachment, leaving to the left of the parking lot. So, I realized, the detachment left, leaving me. I couldn't understand it. But nevertheless, he rushed after the detachment along the path that he had trodden. This night taught me to read the steppe. I walked for an hour and a half. In the darkness, I noticed the corner of a building. I remembered the Bati card and guessed that it was a koshar. But it was at that moment that he received a blow to the head and lost consciousness. When he woke up, he was on his knees with his hands twisted back, some kind of bag was put on his head. I caught the smell of sweat and wheat concentrate. There was a ringing in my ears, my head ached. I felt that blood was flowing from a broken head. I thought that the earflaps protected well, otherwise they would have smashed my head. I was on my knees with my head against the wall. What was I thinking? Nothing at that moment. All I could hear was the beating of my own heart and the noise in my head. Then he caught the smell of sheep droppings. Gradually consciousness began to return. Then he heard footsteps. A group of people approached me. And suddenly he heard the voice of his friend Fyodor Voronin. He reported to Batya: "We captured one parasite here, a scout, followed in our footsteps, tracked down. And PPSH was taken away from him. At the same time, he hit me in the ribs with his boot. From this blow I fell

on the side. Then "Dad" ordered: "Pick him up and take the bag off your head." And suddenly everyone was silent.

Then I heard the whisper of "Bati", I felt his embrace. He hugged me and whispered: "My son, dear, is alive. And we've already buried you. My dear boy is alive. What a joy!" He hugged me and kissed my bloodied face. Then he suddenly shouted: "What are you waiting for! Untie him! And the nurse here, quick! Raya Tikhonova came running, crying, she began to wipe my face. Then she put a bandage on her head and a bloody ear, all the skin from which was torn off, and I did not notice this in the cold. When this procedure was over, "Dad" said to the nurse: "Daughter, half a cup of alcohol and water from my reserve, live!" I poured the life-giving moisture into myself in one gulp and greedily drank the bitter water, not two sips, as was customary, but a whole mug. Warmth spread over the frozen body, and most importantly, peace of mind appeared: I am with my own people. Falling asleep, I managed to whisper: "Dad, there are legionnaires in the khotun, Kalmyks." And I also heard the voice of the commissioner: "I told you that this guy can be trusted!"

On that I switched off. The nervous tension of this night, gathered into a fist, helped me to endure everything, and now it has let go. Half a mug of alcohol on an empty stomach dumped me and I fell asleep. Then they told me that in a dream I cried and laughed at the same time and kept repeating: I am at home, at home. "Dad" ordered the medical instructor not to leave me and make sure that I did not freeze. After all, alcohol takes away body heat. Raya Tikhonova sat next to me for the rest of the night, systematically turning me over. Fyodor Voronin woke me up in the morning. He brought a pot of hot lamb porridge.

Our reconnaissance group completed the task. She intercepted a German communications officer, who, accompanied by a half-platoon of Cossacks, was trying to get through the steppe to Salsk. After all, the roads were blocked by our patrols. There was a fleeting battle, as a result of which this officer from the headquarters of Field Marshal Kleist and a couple of his guards were taken prisoner, the rest were killed or scattered. On the way back, the scouts picked up a sheep that was roaming the steppe. So she decorated our porridge. After I had eaten, I was called to the management.

They, as I believed, had just spoken with the headquarters. I noticed the radio operator was packing his walkie-talkie. "Dad" demanded from me a full report on

night adventure. Then he asked how I feel, have you recovered? And again he repeated that he no longer expected to see me alive. After a pause, already in the tone of an order, he said, pointing to the prisoners: "These are in the corner of the barn, their hands are tied, tie their legs as well. Day will be here. People are very tired, let them rest. Organization of protection for you - think carefully and report. Before leaving for the night crossing, you will put the prisoners to waste." Smiling, he added: "Your friend met you well. But how he was killed, he considered you dead.

When it began to get dark, I called Viktor Aksenov and gave him the order of "Bati" about the prisoners. We untied their legs and, with our hands twisted behind our backs, led them into the steppe. The order to "put into consumption" meant execution. Both Victor and I had to shoot the enemy soldiers many times, but from afar. And so, looking into the eyes of people doomed to death, it happened for the first time. We knew they were enemies and hated them to death. But shooting from three steps at a defenseless person was unusual and extremely unpleasant.

Having moved about a hundred meters from the fold, Viktor killed both of them with two short bursts from a machine gun. The heads of the prisoners shattered like rotten watermelons. What was I thinking during this execution? I imagined how the "executors" of the NKVD shot my father and his comrades-in-arms in the basement on the Lubyanka, and from this I was filled with anger.

Victor and I threw dry wormwood and feather grass over the dead, after which we returned to the fold. The detachment had supper before the night march, but I refused to eat. The sight of the stew made me vomit. It seemed to me that these were brains from the broken heads of captives.

Once, much later, while already serving in the Cossack corps, I had to shoot a captured German SS officer, about 45 years old in appearance. He stood with his back to me, but then turned around and our eyes met. I saw in his eyes fear, despair and hatred at the same time. It lasted for a moment. Then he asked me in pure Russian with a Moscow accent: "What, are you going to finish me?" I told him that he was a fascist, a monster and a criminal, and that he deserved nothing else. And he told me that everything they do with our people, they learned from us, and that the Gestapo was built on the model of the Soviet GPU. This cruel

I couldn't stand the truth, and I smashed his head with a burst from a machine gun. In

the evening we rested, finished our porridge. Fortunately, there was a lot of fuel in the koshara, this made it possible to eat hot. We filled the flasks, the well was next to the koshar. The prisoners were shot and marching order again moved into the darkness. Frozen dry sagebrush rustled anxiously underfoot. My ammunition has already been distributed among the fighters. After all, I was considered dead. I was given back my own bloody duffel bag, which was put on my head at a night meeting, and they allocated ammunition. In addition to my PPSH, I took the MG-34 machine gun and spare belts for it. Still, going back was much easier. He put a belt from a machine gun around his neck, put his hands on its barrel and butt, hung the machine gun on his right shoulder. I didn't have a front bag. So three days passed without incident. During this period, according to the

commander's calculations, we covered about a hundred kilometers. On the fourth day of the journey, at the next halt, a command suddenly sounded: "Get up, everyone get up and walk, move your toes, whoever freezes them, that's the end!". For some reason, "Dad" was nervous, and this was passed on to us. And again march in the same order. The traffic went on as usual for a couple of hours. But suddenly a strong, very cold wind blew. "Dad" stopped, licked his finger and raised it. Then he

stopped the head watch. When we, having broken the formation, huddled around him and the commissar, he shouted: "During the movement, reduce the distance between the pairs to the extent possible. The storm is coming." So the inhabitants of the Kalmyk steppes call snow storms, when a heavy wind carries snow flakes mixed with black prickly dust. This mixture blinds the eyes, clogs the mouth and nose. Then horses perish in the steppe, cattle fall. A person caught in the steppe, far from home, the wind can knock down and prevent him from getting up.

We walked, stumbling in the dark, rubbing our watery eyes, trying to protect ourselves from the burning wind with our free hand, to hide our faces in the raised collar of our overcoat. Shurgan is a black storm. There is nothing worse than a black storm that suddenly swooped in at night in the steppe. And we walked in this seething black whirlwind. A command was passed along the column to join hands and walk in single file.

And so we walked, falling every now and then, lifting each other up. Everyone understood: falling behind is death. Ahead, replacing each other, walked either "Dad", then the commissar, then Aksenov Sr., checking the direction of movement by the oscillating compass needle.

A warning was passed along the column to "Bati" in no case to land. Whoever sits down will not get up. And then his request followed: "Sons, who consider themselves men, take weapons from the girls, support them." The sons themselves walked with their eyes closed and slept on the go. But the request of "Bati" shook us up. I myself was barely dragging my feet, but nevertheless I took a bag with medicines from the medical instructor, and then a sniper rifle from Natasha Potapova. Probably, others, feeling like men, did the same. I no longer felt anything. One concern stuck in my head - not to let go of the hand of the one walking in front, not to fall. After a while, I felt that someone was removing a sniper rifle from my left shoulder. Looking around, I saw Fedya Voronin. He told me - commander, we need to share - again he took and squeezed my hand. So we went all night without a halt. By dawn, the shurgan subsided. "Dad" allowed to make a halt. For a day's rest, he chose a hollow overgrown with

feather grass and wormwood. I wanted to drink like crazy. I have some water left in my flask. When I brought it to my mouth, I saw the eyes of my girls. They looked at the flask and their lips trembled. I called them, handed them a flask, warned: "One sip of each." They rushed towards me, each took a huge drink, and when they returned the flask, it was completely empty. I had to make do with snow. Thank God there was a lot of it, but it was gray with dust. Only in the thickets of dry sagebrush, in shallow lowlands on the leeward side,

could a little pure snow be heated. In search of him, we searched all around.

After some time, when all the fighters, having swallowed snow, gathered in the center of the hollow, "Dad" approached me and, putting his hand on my shoulder (he had such a habit of communicating), said loudly so that everyone could hear: "In such

weather, the Germans the nose will not stick out of the dugouts. But horse patrols of Kalmyk or Cossack patrols may appear. Stay vigilant, son. You will be on duty one at a time, for half an hour

every. Looking to appoint only the strongest guys. You start with yours. Now fighters from other groups will come up. Determine the order, let them lie down next to each other in the order of duty. Then he gave me his watch. So, I'll be first

on duty. "In half an hour you will wake up the second number and give him the watch," said "Dad," and so on in the prescribed manner. And do not forget to warn the shifters so that when they go on duty, be sure (he repeated this word twice) to wake up the sleeping ones and make them change their position, roll over and make sure that the sleeping boots are lowered, and they move their toes, otherwise they will freeze. . "Dad" patted me on the shoulder and left. This day

was the most difficult and memorable. All the fighters, except for those on duty, slept like the dead, there was no power to wake them up. The attendants themselves had to turn the sleeping ones over, some had to lower their boots.

I, as always, was replaced by Fedya Voronin. I gave him the order "Bati" and instantly fell asleep. Everyone woke up when it started to get dark. I found that my friend Fedya was lying nearby, and our medical instructor was attached between us. How she managed to push us apart, I have no idea.

After the general rise was announced, the order was given for everyone to jump. We did this exercise for ten minutes. Then a general dinner was announced. "Whoever has water left can drink. Grub spend sparingly - a can of stew per person. The path ahead is not easy," said "Batya". According to him, last night we walked no more than 20-25 kilometers. The well is the same. I didn't want to eat. I just wanted to drink. But "Batya" ordered everyone to eat by force. The stew got stuck in my throat. Again they looked for pure snow and swallowed it along with the stew. Ate sitting. They searched for snow by crawling along the hollow on their belly. This was followed by a new order to the medical instructor: "Daughter, take account of all bottles of alcohol, use it only for medical purposes and with my permission." "Dad" spoke calmly, his words had a calming effect.

When they stopped chewing, "Dad" gave a new order: "check and repair the legs." We took off our shoes in the cold, rubbed our feet with snow. The medical instructor examined the legs of each, greased

abrasions. Then the legs were equipped. When this procedure was over, "Dad" asked his deputy for intelligence to inspect everyone's weapons. Almost everyone's shutters went with difficulty. "Oh," said Aksenov Sr., "it was necessary to remove the grease thickened in the cold in time." We all moved the shutters for about ten minutes until they began to move freely.

In these small but vital concerns, the time passed until total darkness fell. Then followed the usual formation in a column of two, and we went.

Ahead of the head patrol, then "Dad" with a compass in his hands, from time to time he illuminated it with a flashlight. Messengers scurried between him and the head patrol all the time so that the patrol did not deviate from the correct direction of the column.

And we wandered like a flock of sheep behind our leader, understanding little, barely distinguishing the silhouettes of the couple in front. We walked, barely dragging our shabby legs and falling dead on the halts.

By dawn we came to the area of the well. "Dad" stopped the detachment, ordered everyone to lie down and not make noise, Aksenov Sr. to reconnoiter the area around the well. When Uncle Sasha, as we called Aksenov Sr., returned to the location of the detachment with a reconnaissance group, it turned out that an ambush of Kalmyk legionnaires was located at the well: five armed Kalmyks and a camel with a cart. The legionnaires were drinking tea and arguing very loudly about something. "Dad" ordered me

to take two snipers from my group, crawl closer to the well and silently remove the ambush, but one must be captured alive. We added silencers to the sniper rifles - Bromit devices. They were worn on rifle barrels

like bayonets.

Hiding in the undergrowth of feather grass and dry wormwood, we crawled fifteen meters to the well. From this distance, despite the predawn dusk, the Kalmyks were clearly visible.

My snipers, a girl and a guy, easily took off four. The fifth, not understanding what was happening, started to run, but they shot him in the thigh and he, having fallen down, began to ride. They grabbed him by the arms and dragged him to the Bata. And the camel calmly stood still and chewed its cud.

The water was not tested this time. Since the Kalmyks drank, then we can too. The soldiers literally ran to the well, greedily pounced on the water. She was a bit bittersweet. But it was water. Everyone got drunk and filled their flasks. Our mood lifted. This time we ate happily. Again a can of stew for two and two crackers for each. They removed the kettles, which had never been used during the entire trip, just in case, fill them with water. "Dad" ordered to drag the dead legionnaires a hundred meters from the deck. Search the corpses, collect everything useful and bring it to him. Pick up the cartridges, remove the bolts from the rifles and scatter them in different directions. Scouts, surveying the area around the well, found

nearby is a small depression where the detachment is located.

We dragged the bodies of the killed legionnaires away from here, covered them with dry feather grass and wormwood. The wounded Kalmyk was interrogated by the commissar and Aksenov Sr. I was close to them. They spoke Kalmyk. I analyzed only the well-known words of the Russian obscenity, which Dorji Goryaevich used from time to time. "Dad" also understood the Kalmyk language, he went through the documents taken from the

dead. The commissioner ended the interrogation. The prisoner turned out to be the senior of the ambush destroyed by us. Then he talked to "Batya" and, having called me, ordered to drag the prisoner aside and shoot me. Disguise the corpse by covering it with plucked weeds. I singled out two guys, they carried out this order.

I asked what to do with the camel and cart. "Batya" said that he should be taken to the lowland, to where the detachment was located, lay down the camel, inspect the cart and disguise it. He instructed Dziuba to check the cargo laid on the cart. I asked one of my guys to take the camel to our location. I don't remember who it was. But when he went up to the camel and took the bridle, he stopped chewing, and then suddenly turned to him and spat. The whole face of our lad was completely covered with a green-brown porridge of camel saliva. This caused an outburst of laughter. All the fighters laughed, "Dad" too. But here the commissioner interrupted the general fun. "What are you happy about," he said. A camel in the bare steppe is visible for ten kilometers. See this bungler to the well and help him clean up. After all, he is nothing

sees." Then he said in his own language to one intelligence officer - a Kalmyk. He went up to the camel, patted him on the face, said a few words to him and the camel followed him. In the hollow he himself lay down on his belly. Dzyuba found several felted cavities on the cart, apparently bedding for spending the night on frozen ground, a water can and a bag with wrestlers - these are pieces of cornmeal dough boiled in sheep fat and butter. They do not dry out over time and are very satisfying. Bor-tsiki divided everyone equally. The can was filled with water. The arba was pelted with dry weeds. The cavities of dried wool were laid on the ground and those who were lucky lay down on them. "Dad" walked away a little, looked at the

rookery and said: "Now we are with transport. It will be easier to walk." He warned that the wells attracted all those who were thirsty, including mounted patrols of legionnaires, and the Germans too, so keep your ears open. Organization of security according to a well-established scheme. Pyatnitsky's group starts, as always. The day passed quietly. It got cold in the morning. The

temperature again dropped to 20 degrees below zero. An icy wind whistled through the willow. He burned his face. The lowland did not protect well from the piercing wind. In the willow they crawled on all fours. We ate normally, examined the weapons. Smoked in a fist. From time to time, "Batya" got up, looking through binoculars at the deserted steppe. She looked like a raging sea, in which dirty white ice floes floated.

Then the commander, radio operator and commissar retired to the side. The radio operator sat down, took off his mittens and woolen gloves, wrote down what "Dad" dictated. Then he conjured, encrypting the report. He breathed into his hands, rubbed his fingers, opened the bag with the radio, connected the anode and incandescent batteries, put on the headphones under his hat and began to transmit intelligence data in Morse code, write down the received instructions from the leadership. Then he switched the radio, caught the transmission of the Sovinformburo. Moscow transmitted the latest news.

The commissar informed us that on December 30, 1942, the villages of Troitskoye and Voznesenovka were liberated. A semicircle formed around Elista. The Germans tried to create a layered defense around Elista, gathering the available forces to defend it. But on December 31, Elista, the capital of Kalmykia, was liberated.

The news brought everyone to their feet. For the first time since entering the mission, joyful faces appeared. "Bate" with difficulty managed to calm the guys down. But his eyes sparkled with joy. He even allowed us to drink a sip of alcohol, which was done instantly. Then came the command: "Prepare to move." And, turning to Dzyuba, he ordered: "Fill the can that stands on the cart with water. Put down the load. If possible, unload the fighters. He asked the commissioner to appoint a Kalmyk to manage the camel. When everything was done, the command followed - on a campaign.

The night crossing brought no surprises. Walking was much easier. We are already involved in this process. There was plenty of water, and the arba carried the bulk of the luggage. Weapons, as always, were kept at the ready. When "Batya" announced the day and instructed intelligence to search the neighborhood to find a place to lie down, it turned out that there was a small Kalmyk khotun nearby, about a kilometer from us. "Dad" gathered his headquarters, they discussed something for a long time. Then he announced the decision to us: "Dnevka will be in khotun." And he explained the reason.

"The Germans," he said, "are not up to us now. And the scattered parts of the legionnaires are not afraid of us. We live a week without hot food. It's dangerous for the stomach. We will enter the khotun in three groups, just in case, to cover it from the flanks and from the front. And he explained the plan of operation. My group got the entrance to the khotun from the front. The operation went smoothly. We went around all the huts, there were a dozen and a half - adobe

buildings, large yards. They include sheep, lambs, cows with calves and, in some places, horses. The population is only women, children, a few old people. We examined every house, especially the yards, and found nothing special. Dzyuba forced the

Kalmyk women, under the supervision of our girls, to cook barley porridge for us from our stocks. The old men slaughtered a young lamb. Hot porridge with meat seemed just an unusual delicacy.

Then we were treated to Kalmyk tea, a special drink made from sheep's milk, to which some water, lamb fat, butter and salt are added. And all this is being eaten by wrestlers. It was

unusual, but we ate with great pleasure. Dorji Goryaevich and Aksenov Sr. were talking to the old people. Then "Batya"

gathered us group commanders and discussed the defense system. "Each group is assigned a field of view of 120 degrees. At each site, three are on duty, one of them is a messenger. A group leader is responsible for each sector. He also monitors the change of people on duty. If you notice anything unusual in the steppe, immediately report to the headquarters through messengers. To accommodate people, select places that are convenient for defense. Don't let the residents out of the khotun. The headquarters of the detachment is located in this hut, "Batya" pointed out. If everything goes smoothly, we will rest here for a day. Sleep fighters in turn. Dinner at three o'clock. If everything is

clear, in places!". All was quiet for three hours. Some were on duty, others were sleeping. After a hearty breakfast, yes in the quiet it was excellent. But suddenly "Dad" announced the alarm. It turned out that a cavalry patrol of legionnaires appeared on the left, either Cossacks or Kalmyks. They appeared on the horizon and dismounted. And their reconnaissance group, numbering five people, was approaching the khotun at a trot. We drove calmly, as if we were at home. "Dad" ordered the snipers and machine gunners to advance, take comfortable positions, let them in about 50 meters. Shoot only at his command. Machine gunners set the sight on the main group of legionnaires, snipers hit on reconnaissance. Everyone else, g

Everything turned out great. Snipers took off reconnaissance. The machine gunners fired and scattered the rest. They disappeared instantly. We found three dead and two wounded scouts. There were also killed legionnaires among the main group of the patrol. The wounded were interrogated, after the interrogation they were shot dead. We got three horses as trophies. We learned from the prisoners that the Germans and their servants had left Priyutnoye and moved across the Manych River. So the area intended for the operations of our detachment has already been liberated. At the

appointed time, "Dad" contacted the headquarters, reported the situation, received instructions for further actions. In addition, he learned that the center for training, formation and dispatch of detachments behind enemy lines and the headquarters of the southern department of the TsSHPD were transferred to Elista, where the appearances and communications with groups still operating behind enemy lines were also transferred. No

to complete the territory, receive equipment and food, cross the front line again and move ahead of the retreating enemy troops to Rostov and Kropotkin. Our group was ordered to quickly arrive in the village of Priyutnoye in order to restore Soviet power and economy in the Priyutinskiy ulus. Having received data on the general situation in the republic and a

specific task for our detachment, "Batya" announced to us that we would spend the night in this khotun, and the further movement of the detachment would be carried out in the daytime. Night security - according to a well-established scheme. The night passed without incident. True, while spending the night in Kalmyk huts, we picked up fleas, which in the future really baked everyone.

We reached our destination in three steps. Along the way, there were several more skirmishes with legionnaire horse patrols. They were mostly Kalmyks, but there were also Cossacks and Caucasians. They constantly followed us, appearing suddenly from the right, then from the left, but mostly kept at a distance of a shot - they were afraid of our machine guns. What damage we inflicted on them is unknown, but we ourselves lost one lad.

We entered the Shelter at noon. What date it happened, I don't remember. The village was large, thousands for 25 people. Until we reached the center of the village, we were seen off at a distance by children. And the adult population stood at the gates of the houses and silently watched our procession. Some greeted Batya, Dorji Goryaev and Dziuba. After all, they were residents of this village.

We reached the center and settled in the school building. The Germans had a hospital there. Our detachment lived for several days in this school-hospital in the barracks. The Manych River flowed nearby. And, as always, our coast was gentle, and the Germans were located on a steep bank.

Chapter

9

On the restoration of Soviet power in the Priyutinsky ulus of the Kalmyk ASSR

We were in readiness No. 1. We were told that if the Germans broke through the defense of our troops, we should go back to the steppe, or to the Manych estuaries, and carry out the previously assigned task. At night, we patrolled the center of the village and guarded the building of the uluskom of the party. "Batya" became secretary of the uluskom of the party, and the commissar became chairman of the ulus executive committee.

All the fighters of the detachment were distributed among various bodies of the ulus administration. Duffel bags with mines and explosives were piled up in one of the rooms of the school, which was always guarded. On the bags, each wrote his name in ink pencil. Those who needed it carried weapons with them, for example, guys assigned to the police. The rest kept it in the barracks so that it was at hand. Deputy commander for material support Dziuba organized a canteen in a building located next to the party uluskom. Soon I was summoned to the uluskom of the party, where "Batya"

announced that the bureau of the uluskom approved me as secretary of the ulus committee of the Komsomol. I was the Komsomol organizer of our detachment, so my consent was not asked for approval for this position. I took this message as an order from the commander and, as always, answered "yes!".

The uluskomsomol was allocated one large room in the building of the newly opened party office of the uluskom of the party, and I began to work. First, at the direction of the commissar, all the Komsomol members of our detachment got registered with me, although no one had membership cards. Leaving for the mission, we left all the documents at the headquarters of the special school. I instructed each of our guys to find out in their organizations who was a Komsomol member here before the occupation and send them to me to be checked and registered. And guys come to me and girls.

I asked everyone to present a Komsomol card. Many didn't have them. During the occupation, some deliberately destroyed them, while others for some reason could not save them. I demanded an explanation. From among those who kept the tickets, we created the Komsomol activists of the region, and he, in turn, elected the bureau of the Komsomol uluskom from among his members.

Who, if not the locals, was to know about the behavior of the inhabitants of the Priyutny during the occupation. Indeed, we managed to learn from them much of what was going on in Priyutnoye and in the area of our operations. Many of these stories were of interest to both the state security agencies and counterintelligence of the 28th Army. Meanwhile,

the Soviet Information Bureau reported that in mid-January 1943, the 51st and 2nd Guards Army drove the remnants of Herman Goth's tank army from positions on the Sal River and pushed it back to the Manych River, northeast of Rostov-on-Don. So a week passed. Weekends

didn't exist back then. One day, the liaison uluskom of the party gave me a call from "Bati". I was used to the fact that the commander or commissar called in one or the other soldier of our detachment on various issues and did not attach any importance to this. When I burst into his office without knocking, I was taken aback. The office was full of people. It turns out that there was a meeting of the bureau of the uluskom of the party. "Dad", when he saw me, said: "Here he is. Sit down, son, and report on the work of the uluskom of the Komsomol. I did not dare to sit down,

immediately reported on what had been done in a week. Like, an asset of the future Komsomol organization of the ulus was created, but the organization was created only in the Priyutny - the center of the ulus, there is still a lot of work to be done in the villages and khotuns, and for this there are no material opportunities, suitable people and transport. In addition, gangs of deserters and legionnaires who did not have time to escape roam the steppe. Sending people there is just dangerous. When he finished the

report, "Batya" declared that I understood my task correctly and asked an unexpected question: "To whom can you transfer the affairs of the secretary of the Komsomol committee? Who from your asset will be able to continue what they started? I was silent, not understanding anything. As if I was praised and suddenly removed. I stood as if guilty

the boy was silent.

Here our commissar Dorji Goryaev, a member of the bureau and chairman of the executive committee of the ulus, got up from the table, came up, put his hand on his shoulder and said: "Do not be shy, sergeant. It's all good, you're great. It's just that the bureau of the ulus committee of the party decided to recommend you for another job, as an assistant to the ulus prosecutor." This news shocked and frightened me, I murmured that I did not understand anything in such a matter. Seeing my confusion, "Dad" said: "Don't be shy, son, we have tested you well in difficult conditions and we are sure that you will cope with this task successfully. It's hard to just get started." And he added: "This is your new combat mission." The words worked, I calmed down.

"But your new boss is the prosecutor of the ulus Artamonov Vasily Nikanorovich." The prosecutor stood up, extended his hand to me and asked if I knew where the prosecutor's office was? Of course, I did not know and was generally afraid of this institution. He gave me the address and added: "This is where the Gestapo was located during the occupation. Tomorrow by 9 o'clock in the morning you should be at work."

Everything was clear to everyone. The decision, as always, was made in advance. And what was it like for me, a guy of 17 years old and, moreover, with such a biography? What will happen if they find out how I corrected it. My confused thoughts were interrupted by the question: "So who do you recommend as the secretary of the uluskom of the Komsomol?" Without hesitation, I answered that Rais Tikhonov was our medical instructor. "Dad" asked: "Why?". I said that she was a good worker and, moreover, a girl, she would not

be drafted into the army. The bureau of the uluskom of the party immediately approved her candidacy, and decided to recommend me to the government of the republic for the position of assistant prosecutor of the Priyutinskiy ulus, warning that I had until the end of the day to hand over the Komsomol cases. "And yet, son, you are entrusted with the patronage of the Komsomol of the ulus, since you are better than others in this work. This, - said Batya, - is already a party assignment for you. With such parting words, I left the office and went to hand over the cases. The house in which the prosecutor's office was located was roomy, although one-story, it had several rooms and a large yard, enclosed by a fence. The prosecutor greeted me cordially, invited me to sit down and tell about myself. In front of him lay my characteristics from the special school and from the army. The conversation seemed to be about nothing, but I felt that he was carefully feeling me, trying to

find out what I can do. After talking with me for about an hour, he warned that my candidacy would have to be approved by the prosecutor of the republic. But these are only formalities, since everything has already been agreed with the republican prosecutor's office.

He also said that while the staff of the prosecutor's office is only five people, it's you and me and three girls, a secretary, a messenger and a cleaner, she's a stoker. That he's overwhelmed with work, a lot of things to sort out, so I have to unburden him a little. And he handed me several documents, warning me that by the next morning I had to study them thoroughly. And he handed me the keys to my office and the safe in it. The office was 15 meters square,

a little smaller than my father's office in the Comintern. By the large window stood a huge oak table, behind which was a large leather armchair. There are several chairs against the walls. A small table was attached to the table, two chairs stood on its sides. To the right, against the wall, there was a large cupboard with mirrored doors, adjoined by a wide pedestal, on which stood a nickel-plated samovar on a beautiful tray, with several glasses around it. To the left behind the table, on a small but massive pedestal, stood a large safe. In the corner of the room was a tiled stove. She was clearly in two offices, she was drowned from the secretary's room. That's how I got the first office in my life.

The doors of my office and the prosecutor's office opened into a small reception room where the secretary was sitting. There was a table and several chairs for those persons who were summoned to the prosecutor's office. On the secretary's desk were a typewriter, a telephone, an inkwell, a jar of school pens and pencils. In the corner was a large filing cabinet. The phone didn't work yet. Messengers were used for communication. Every organization had

such a position.

In the corridor, I found three more locked doors. Two were intended for future investigators, as the prosecutor later explained, and in a small third room there was a place for a cleaning lady and a messenger. From the half-open door of this room, three girlish faces looked out, which looked at me with curiosity.

I returned to my office. He leaned his machine gun against the safe and thought. How to start a new job? Sitting at the table, I realized that he

not for me. Only my head peeked out from behind it. Either the table was high or the chair was very low. Then I took a thick folder with documents from the occupying authorities out of the closet and put it on the seat. Now I looked almost normal. But where to start? Of course, from the staff. I called the girls to me and found out who was called, who was how old. I found out that the secretary is a little older than me, the other two are my age. It turned out that all three had the same name - Maria. And how to contact them? The last name is embarrassing. We agreed that I would call the secretary by her first name and patronymic. She was shocked. I was the first to call her that. The other two are named. I asked if they

were Komsomol members? All three answered in the affirmative. Have you registered? The answer was negative. He demanded that they do it tomorrow. And he summed it up, since we have four Komsomol members in the prosecutor's office, this is already a whole organization, we need to elect a secretary. They chose Masha, the secretary, as the most literate. So I did everything I knew and could do. Having released the girls, he began to get acquainted with the documents received from the prosecutor

The first one was written in the clear handwriting of my new boss, it defined the rights and duties of an assistant prosecutor. I read it several times and learned it like the multiplication table. The other two were Decrees of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR signed by M.I. Kalinin.

The first ordered all citizens of the liberated territories to hand over to the Soviet authorities the state, state farm and collective farm property that they managed to hide from the occupation authorities. For failure to comply with the decree, the perpetrators should be prosecuted. The second decree prohibited

moonshine. It said that converting grain into moonshine when it is not enough for the army and workers is a crime, and those responsible for it should also be held criminally liable. At this time, the secretary knocked on the door and, calling me by my

first and patronymic, which was also unusual for me, said that "comrade Voronin" wanted to see me. I jumped out from behind the table, met Fyodor at the door. He was stunned looking around the office, then said: "Well, you give, commander. Even Bati's office is more modest. I smiled stupidly and just shrugged my shoulders. He removed from

Shoulder machine gun and holding it between his legs, he began to spread the news of the

last two days. By order of "Bati", our detachment left the school building. All weapons and equipment were transferred to the basement of the party uluskom building. All of us were instructed to stay in apartments, but also in the center of the city. He had already looked after the house, the hostess agreed to let us stay, allocated a small but clean room with two beds and a table. She lives with two small children, a front-line soldier. My husband is at the front, does not write, probably died. He told me the address of this house and added that "Batya" ordered him to be with me and help in everything. The time was approaching dinner, having warned the secretary, Fedya and I went to the dining room. There they met "Batya" and the

commissar. They asked to visit them after dinner. When we had dinner and came to "Bata" in the office, he sat us down and, turning to me, explained that he had met with the

prosecutor in the morning, they agreed on a new combat mission. "The fact is," he said, that there are two hospitals in Priyutnoye, a kindergarten for the children of front-line soldiers, and a school is opening. The wounded and children must be fed. There is milk and meat in the ulus, but there is not enough bread. But there was a lot of grain in the ulus. According to our agents, it is known that the Germans did not export grain from the ulus. So the people are hiding it. The fact that they have preserved it is very good, but it is a state farm, that is, state-owned. It must be returned, and

they hide. Your task, son, is to find grain and feed the wounded and children of front-line soldiers. "We," Batya continued, with Dorji Goryaevich - he pointed to the commissar - carried out similar work in the 30s and successfully. Sheltered - the village is rich. Dispossessed kulaks were exiled here from the Cossack regions, from the Don, Kuban, and even from the Terek. They settled

well here, but they did not forget the ways of sheltering the grain." Here "Dad" spoke about the search methods. "And you, son," he turned to Fedor, attaching himself to his commander to help. During operations to search for and seize grain, you constantly follow him, a little behind and cover from all sorts of surprises, and they will certainly come. In the Shelter the population is different. Many collaborated with the occupiers. This must not be forgot

You will receive instructions on the legal part about this operation from Vasily Nikonorovich, the prosecutor.

After a short silence, "Dad" continued: "Yesterday Dorji Goryaevich returned from Elista and told the sad news. Do you remember Germashov's group No. 59? She died in early November. Of course, we remembered this name, but we knew nothing about the group itself.

"The commissar in Elista met with Alexei Mikhailovich Dobroserdov - you know that our special school and the headquarters of the southern direction of the TsSHPD were transferred there from Astrakhan. So, Dobroserdov gave Dorji Goryaevich for review a certificate of sabotage and reconnaissance group No. 59, compiled on the basis of the results of radio reports, a survey of the population, protocols of interrogation of captured Germans and legionnaires. And he asked the commissioner to give us a copy of it. It said the

following: "The group of Germashov I.G. No. 59 consisting of 22 fighters, including: Russians - 12, Ukrainians - 1, Kalmyks - 9 people. With weapons: machine guns - 8, rifles - 113, revolvers - 2, cartridges in total - 5384, anti-personnel mines - 220, explosives (thol) - 44 kg. The area of operation of the group is the vicinity of Elista, the grader road in the Elista-Yashkul section, the main highway along which the Germans contacted one of the most important front-line sections of the Astrakhan direction - Khulhuta. Oran-Buluk khotun base area.

Having left Naryn-Khuduk on October 15, 1942, the group arrived in the area of their operations by the end of October. Along the way, the headman of one of the villages and several policemen were captured and shot, a German convoy and several vehicles with grain were destroyed, while a dozen and a half Germans were destroyed. Several raids were made in the city of Elista, including the kitchen and dining room of the German division headquarters.

In early November, the group discovered German intelligence consisting of 28 people, took the fight, in which they destroyed 17 Germans. The group itself had no losses. On the same day, the command of the German division sent more than 300 soldiers and officers to destroy it, who arrived in 15 vehicles and surrounded the group. A fierce battle ensued, in which many enemy soldiers were destroyed, as the Germans themselves spoke with malice. The superiority of the enemy was tenfold. When the ammo ran out

the fighters of the group who survived were captured by the enemy. They were taken to the Gestapo and, after interrogation, shot. Most of them, both in battle and during interrogations, behaved courageously, steadfastly and heroically.

Thus ended the epic of another of the sabotage and reconnaissance groups abandoned behind enemy lines, formed in our special school. Much later, I found the very report of the TsSHPD representatives about the partisan detachment No. 59 of I.G. Germashov dated January 1943 [23] .

As I wrote above, our

detachment continued to exist, although all its fighters and commanders were assigned to different organizations with the aim, as we were explained, to assist in the restoration of Soviet power in the Priyutinskiy ulus. All this we perceived as a temporary phenomenon. We were at the disposal of the TsSHPD and from day to day we were expecting a new combat mission. "Dad" and the commissar were not only absolute

authority for us, but also our direct commanders. They systematically gathered us all together in the canteen of the uluskom and acquainted us with the latest news, with the situation in the republic, gave various instructions that we considered more important than temporary work duties. Although both of them were sent to the same point: to contribute to the establishment of a normal life in the territory under our jurisdiction. We learned that the detachment of I.N. Chernyshova does the same thing as us, but in a neighboring ulus.

There was a call to the army in Priyutnoye, but they did not touch us. Sometimes the military registration and enlistment office resorted to the help of our detachment. We had to catch draft evaders and deserters, which was much more difficult.

The prosecutor, having learned that I had received a detailed briefing from the secretary of the uluskom, said that he could hardly add anything. He only checked how I understood the Decrees of the Supreme Council, made some advice on official actions during searches, gave me a list of those persons from whom grain should be sought. He also issued appropriate warrants for these actions and a seal to seal the premises where the hidden grain would be found. It turns out that the former underground workers and agents have already reported who hid the state farm grain.

In the morning, Fedor and I began to act. We went into the first of these courtyards, presented a search warrant. I, showing the owner of the house the Decree of the Supreme Council, asked if there was state grain in his house? The owner of the house, an old Cossack, looked at me with such malice and contempt that it became clear to me that there was grain. I forced him to sign on the back of the warrant and make a note that he did not hide the state grain. After examining the hut, we found three sacks of wheat. Looking at the old man and his family, huddled in the kitchen, at the brood of children, I said that this was their food. Where is the rest? The old man suggested that we look for ourselves. We

walked around the yard along the zagata (this is a fence made of old perennial straw, which is laid around the yard every year after each threshing). Nothing suspicious caught our attention. As "Batya" instructed, when walking around the territory, Fedya walked behind with a machine gun at the ready and monitored the situation.

In the barn, where there were a horse and a couple of cows, he paid attention to the cleanliness of the room. Comparing with what I saw in the Kalmyk khotuns, I was struck by the difference in culture, and thought - a good old man. But, having examined the building from the outside, I noticed a discrepancy between the internal volume of the room and its outer contour. Meanwhile, there was no other door. I tapped the butt of the machine gun on the walls of the barn, in this place the sound was muffled, which means it was filled with something. He asked the owner for an ax or a crowbar. He said he didn't have them. And his eyes began to run, he began to get nervous. I carefully examined the barn, found a crowbar, hit the adobe wall a couple of

times and punched a hole from which grain fell. He plugged the hole, called the owner into the hut, began to fill out the search protocol. Women wailed, children clung to them. The picture was depressing. My hands were trembling. I began to ask questions, how much land does he have? What did he sow on it? What was the harvest? If it is his wheat, why is he hiding it? He was confused about the answers. I repeated to him that hiding state property is a criminal offense, that the grain would be confiscated, that he was responsible for its safety. He advised me to hide those three sacks of grain that were in plain sight so as not to loom. We leave them to feed the family, he probably still has them hidden somewhere. The owner

search. Fedor and I made a record of the refusal. In general, the picture was depressing. Leaving

this yard, we went to the next address. There the grain was buried in the yard near the zagata. Walking along it, I slipped and fell. When I got up, I saw an ice crust covered with snow, but only in one place. Everywhere around the soil was soft, but here it was hard as cement. I asked the owner what lies there, but he was silent. I demanded a crowbar. The owner replied that he did not have a scrap. But Fedya pushed him in the side with his machine gun and the crowbar was found. I made him gouge the ice crust. Under it was a well-equipped pit filled with grain (Later we learned that the pits with grain in these places are coated with ashes from dung, which heat the stoves and it works like cement, does not let moisture through). The whole procedure was repeated. But the owner asked to leave some

grain to feed the family. He said that his two sons serve in the Red Army, he has women and grandchildren in his arms. Fedor and I looked at each other and understood each other. Wrote a protocol on the voluntary delivery of grain. I promised him that three sacks of wheat would

leave.

As the day drew to a close, we went for lunch. But they did not feel satisfied with the work done. Rummaging in someone else's manure was unusual and very unpleasant.

In the Prosecutor's Office I reported to Vasily Nikonorovich about the work done. He praised me and said that there was no bread in the hospitals, the bakery had already stopped due to lack of flour, asked how much grain was found. I said that I did not understand much about this, but there would be two or three carts. The prosecutor explained that the grain was carried in boxes; instead of a cart, two horses pulled a large wooden box in the form of a coffin, but without a top cover. It holds 800 kg of grain. Tomorrow I will see it myself. In

the morning, two such boxes and several policemen stood outside our building. The prosecutor prepared the necessary documents, instructed me to supervise the seizure of grain, which the police would accompany to the mill. You need to make sure that the flour does not go to the side. He also said that the first owner should be arrested for harboring state grain, and the second owner should be thanked for the safety of wheat, handed me the relevant documents.

Everything happened as planned. The grain turned out to be much larger than expected. The first owner was arrested by our guys from the police. The second was given three sacks of selected wheat. For the rest of the grain, he gave a safekeeping subscription and received gratitude from the executive committee of the ulus council for the storage and voluntary transfer to the state of the grain he had saved from the invaders. Thus passed another day of my service in a new place in a new

quality.

On the same day, rumors spread throughout the village information about the events that had taken place. Unfamiliar people began to greet me, a boy, complaining about the newly baked officials, trying to help in any way I could and as much as I could. I turned to the prosecutor, he instructed me, like a student at school, explained how to respond to the requests and complaints of citizens. How to isolate the essence of the matter from the verbal flow of offended citizens. For more than two weeks, Fyodor Voronin and I searched for grain.

Some owners gave it voluntarily, they themselves showed where it was hidden. Others tried by all means to lead away from the caches. This was repeated every day, we have already learned to determine the places where we ourselves would hide the grain. 'Cause everything comes

with experience.

One day an extraordinary thing happened. When I found the hidden grain and tried to determine the size of the hole where it was buried, I suddenly got hit in the back and fell to the ground. At the same moment, I heard something hitting the wall of the shed and an automatic burst. It was Fedor who knocked me down with a blow from his shoulder. It turned out that a policeman was hiding in the upper part of the barn, where hay was stored for cattle, and he, not seeing Fedor, launched a pitchfork at me, but missed. They hit the wall. My friend saved me, cut off a policeman with automatic fire. He turned out to be the son of the owner of the house. We forced the owner to open the pit at gunpoint, drew up the necessary documents. All this happened to the accompaniment of the cries of women mourning their son and husband. Yama was not alone. From here we took out three boxes of grain, about two and a half tons. They also found weapons,

cartridges and a lot of different junk taken from the evacuees. The police arrested the owner for harboring a police officer and a government official.

property. After this incident, "Batya" ordered that, in addition to Fedor, I should always, especially on the outskirts of the village, be accompanied by two of our lads from the police.

I also remember another case. We arrived one evening at our apartment. Our hostess, a very kind and good woman, is crying. We asked her what was the matter. It turned out that there was half a bag of rye in the house, but she could not grind it. The grinding master is a peace worker, for bribes he skips moonshiners without a queue, and the wives of front-line soldiers cannot grind their grain. In the morning, when I arrived at the prosecutor's office, I asked my boss for a couple of hours on a personal matter. He came to the hostess, took her half a sack, went with her to the mill. There, having looked at what was happening, he went up to the militiaman and told him to stop the disgrace, so that the wives of the front-line soldiers would pass forward. Miroshnik covered me with a three-story mat and pushed me away from his workplace, while breaking my nose with his elbow. This happened under the general laughter of moonshiners who surrounded him. Miroshnik was a hefty peasant, a head taller than me and twice as wide at the shoulders. I could hardly stand on my feet. I threw a bag of grain under his feet, took his mistress by the hand, and we went out into the street. I reassured her, she wiped the blood off my face, walked her home and asked her to wait a bit, and he went to the prosecutor's office. Anger crushed me. The prosecutor was not there. The secretary brought a wet towel and wiped her face from the blood. The nose bled profusely.

What to do? Who to consult? At this time Fedor came. I asked him to go to the police, take two lads and deliver the director of the mill and the miroshnik to the prosecutor's office, and bring them under machine guns so that everyone could see. What happened at the mill, I later learned from Fyodor. They dragged the half-drunk director out of the office by the scruff of the neck and, pushing him with rifle butts, pushed him out of the mill. Then they did the same with the miroshnik. They expelled all the people from the mill, sealed it up and under machine guns, forcing their hands behind their backs, drove these figures to me at the

prosecutor's office. I sat at my luxurious table. On the left was a machine gun. The secretary reported that, at my call, the detainees were brought. When they were pushed into the office, they were dumbfounded when they saw me. I took the submachine gun and hit the miroshnik in the groin with the butt. When, bent over, he grabbed his manhood with his hands, he hit him

nose. He writhed in pain and looked at me in horror. The policemen stood behind him. I asked the miroshnik why is he not laughing now? After a long pause, I explained to the detainees that I hit the miroshnik as the commander of a partisan detachment, and that if I had met him during the occupation, I would have simply shot him on the spot. Now I will talk to them as an assistant to the ulus prosecutor. Then, turning to the director of the mill, he asked him why he was drunk at work. Why did he shift the management of the enterprise to his deputy. Why do the two of them encourage moonshining and take bribes?

Then, seeing that the miroshnik came to his senses, I called him a criminal, said that I myself saw how he took bribes from moonshiners who paid money for grinding grain not to the cashier, but to his pocket for serving them out of turn. He recalled that he was ignoring the instructions of the government of the republic on extraordinary service to the families of front-line soldiers and, finally, accused him of inflicting light bodily harm on a servant of the law in the performance of his official duties. He said that they both face criminal charges for all this.

punishment.

Then, pointing the miroshnik to a small table, I suggested that he write a detailed explanation of his actions. He sent the director of the mill to the secretary's office, where, under her supervision, he performed the same work. After looking at the explanations, I was struck by a set of empty words. Each had to write specific questions to which they had to answer, as well as acknowledge their deeds. I reminded them that there would still be a thorough check that would show the true state of things. In addition, I forced Miroshnik to write down the approximate amount of bribes per month, what percentage of them he gives to the director, indicate the names and addresses of moonshiners, warning that for lying and harboring I will get him sent to a penal company. While they were writing their explanations, "Dad" called (the phone was already working) and rather rudely asked why the mill was closed and sealed, said that the queue was growing, people were worried. I replied that, according to his own instructions and the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, I began work to suppress moonshine. The director of the mill and the miroshnik sit in the prosecutor's office, write explanations, both of them, according to such and such articles

of the Criminal Code are subject to prosecution responsibility.

“Dad” already calmly said: “Son, the mill must work. She is alone in the whole ulus. We will change directors. But the miroshnik was specially released from the army, since there was no one to replace him. Find a way with the prosecutor to keep him at work.” And he added that after work I had to go to him in the uluskom. The prosecutor is in Elista, so I'll have to take charge of this matter. Having received explanations from both and having

made some additions and corrections, I advised them to add that they wrote these explanations voluntarily and without coercion. Then he asked the policemen, as witnesses, to certify their writings. He demanded to hand over all the money received as bribes to the cashier of the mill and be sure to receive checks for the amount handed over. And if they have hidden grain, then immediately hand it over to the mill in order to avoid a more severe punishment. In the evening I came to the Batya in Uluskom, where I found the commissar. I showed them the explanatory notes, adding that the director did

not control the situation, he was a drunkard, his deputy, the grinding master, was in charge of everything, and this miroshnik was a dishonest person, he could not be trusted. I advised to appoint one of our detachment foremen as director of the mill, someone who would immediately put things in order there. Miroshnik should not be left without punishment; he should have been assigned forced labor in his production. Then during the day he will perform his duties, and he will spend the evening and night in the police detention center. The court in the ulus has not yet worked. So all decisions were made by the party leadership, that is, the commander and commissar of our detachment. After all, it was they who were entrusted with the restoration of Soviet power in the Priyutinsky ulus. On the same evening, I learned that our commissar Dorji Goryaevich Goryaev was appointed chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic.

Returning home, Fyodor and I saw the joyful face of the hostess, who, pointing to a sack standing in the hallway, said that they had just brought flour from the mill. I realized that this was a bribe and turned to the owner with a request not to touch it, it's illegal, it's illegal. But, seeing her tears in her eyes and the goggling eyes of hungry kids, who looked with fear first at their mother, then at me, then at

Fyodor, who was standing at the door with a machine gun, I stroked the hostess on the shoulder and allowed her to pour some flour for herself, after which I tied up bag.

In the morning, having come to work, he again called yesterday's "clients" to himself - the director and the conciliator. They were again brought to me by submachine gunners from the police. I asked them sternly: "Did you slip me a bribe?" They stuttered to convince me that this was not a bribe, but a replacement for my landlady's grain, which I had left at the mill. And they began to explain that rye and wheat cannot be ground at the same time. And the master's children need something to eat. So they brought them a sack of wheat for now. And when they start grinding rye, then they will grind its sack. Here Fyodor intervened and said that they should immediately write a letter to our hostess, saying that the mill staff in the form of material assistance to the wife of a war veteran decided to give her a bag of wheat flour from their stocks. And he asked me: "Really, commander?". I nodded my head in the affirmative.

The director of the mill took out a statement from the pocket of his sheepskin coat, showed that he and the miroshnik had handed over a large sum of money to the cashier and showed me the checks. He also assured me that the grain they saved for the state would be returned

one of these days. Soon the director of the mill was replaced by our detachment, who quickly put things in order in this very important organization for the ulus. And Fedor and I moved to the apartment of our secretary. The house he and his mother had was large and bright. Father and brothers were at the front. We began to live more freely. All three Masha looked after us. Our lads envied us, and the girls were offended that we paid less attention to them. In the ubiquitous bustle of work, it became more and

more every day, February 1943 passed. Discipline in the detachment weakened. Civilian life took its toll. Followed by the command "Bati" to surrender weapons. Only the guys from the police, me and Fyodor, had personal weapons left. Fedya, following the order, followed me all the time, accompanying me in all operations.

On the southern direction of the Soviet-German front, the situation began to change dramatically in our favor. In the

first half of February, the Red Army liberated Rostov-on-Don and Taganrog and entered Kharkov, where heavy fighting ensued. 22

February 4th Panzer Army of Colonel-General Goth, consisting of three tank corps, reinforced by three battalions of heavy tanks "Tiger", counterattacked parts of our army, and on March 14 restored the front along the right bank of the Donets, once again capturing Kharkov. The front line stabilized again, it stretched in a continuous line from Taganrog to Belgorod. And we,

 specially trained reconnaissance saboteurs, were sitting in the village of Priyutnoye and doing what seemed to us trifles. We literally swallowed reports from the fronts and attacked "Batya" with questions about when it would be our turn to fight for the Motherland. "Dad", apparently, did not know what awaits us tomorrow and reassured us as

 best he could. After the incident with the mill, I came to grips with the fight against moonshine. I started from the addresses indicated in the explanation of the miroshnik. In addition, our lads from the detachment supplied me with information every day. Moonshine, as a rule, was driven at night. Therefore, our working day with Fedor was not limited in time. We were always accompanied by a couple of guys from the police as witnesses. Having found moonshine in this or that hut, I presented a search warrant to the mistress or owner of the house. We were obliged to seize it, pour it out, break the dishes, break the apparatus and write a search report. For moonshining, then 6 months of forced labor or a fine of 3,000 rubles were supposed. But it was up to the leadership of the ulus to decide who how to punish. I did my job.

 I approached people selectively. Have inveterate moonshiners broke apparatus. For poor veterans, where moonshine was the only source of livelihood, moonshine stills were carefully lowered on a large scale to the floor and its components simply spread. They are then easily possible "was

restore.

 And what to do with moonshine? As already mentioned, it should have been poured on the ground, the dishes broken and all this reflected in the search protocol. But moonshine, of course, I gave to our guys. We "decorated" them with evening hours at gatherings in the party office. I gave dishes, three-liter bottles - "quarters" to poor villagers (wives of front-line soldiers) for milk. They were then in great deficit, for one bottle they gave two or three loaves of bread.

One day in March, the prosecutor said that I was being summoned to Elista to the republican prosecutor's office for approval. But before leaving, you need to go to the ulus of the party to Vasily Nikitovich Kravchenko (to "Batya"), he wants to talk to me. Then she handed me the slip and asked me to sign it. I asked what it was. He replied that it was a salary. My first paycheck ever!

"Dad" asked me about work, about the boss, about the situation, from my point of view, in the Priyutny itself. He said that the prosecutor was generally satisfied with my work, although, of course, I was very weak in legal matters. Then he gave me three packages: to the regional party committee, personally to the commissar, and to the headquarters of the representative of the TsSHPD, who had been in Elista since January 1943. Then I called the military registration and enlistment office and asked them to give me a lift to Elista. We agreed that the car would be tomorrow by 8

o'clock in the morning near the military registration and enlistment office. In the republican prosecutor's office, I met the prosecutor of the republic. It turned out that he knows everything about me, so the approval in the position was formal. Then he went to the Council of People's Commissars of the Republic. Dorji Goryaevich received me immediately, without a queue. I gave him a package from Bati. He read it fluently and said that he would answer later, then shook hands: "Keep it up, sergeant!" He escorted me to the door, asked me to convey my regards to

"Bate" and best wishes to all the soldiers of the detachment. In the regional committee of the party, after I handed over the package to the secretariat and received a receipt, I wanted to leave, but then the secretary of the regional committee called me, began to ask in detail about the situation in the Priyutny and in general in the ulus. Then he walked to the door of his office. Walking through

high authorities was unusual for me at that time. I confess, I was timid. From the regional party committee I went to our special school. I was met by our instructors, taken to the headquarters. There I saw Alexei Mikhailovich, handed him a package from "Bati". We talked with him for about three hours. He told me about some other groups that were abandoned in the Kalmyk and Sal steppes.

The areas of operation of some sabotage and reconnaissance groups abandoned in the occupied territory, in the rear of the German troops, I give below:

A.R. group Potalov No. 50 "Andrey": Railway line on the section Ipatovo - Petrovskoye.
Group I.N. Chernysheva No.
51 "Old Men": Sandata - Bashanta - Yashalta.

Group V.N. Kravchenko No. 55 "Avenger": Elista - Priyutnoye - Salsk (scheme No. 3)
Group P.N. Yakovlev

No. 57 "Pavel": Trinity ulus to the north
Elisty, Kolkuta, Troitskoye - Uvaga, Chilgir - Sarakha (scheme No. 4).

Group I.G. Germashov No. 59: Vicinities of Elista, Grader road, Elista - Yashkul, Khul-
Khuta, Oran - Buluk khotuny base area (scheme No. 4). L.M. group Chernyakhovsky No.
66 "Maxim": Railway line on

section Orlovsky - Zimovniki (station Kuberle) (scheme No. 5).

A.M. Fedorenko group no. 70 "Aleksandrovtsey": Yashalta -
Kista and the railway line on the section Ipatovo - Divnoye (scheme No. 3).

M.U. group Bataev No. 71 "Manji": Elista - Winterers,
Repair - Treasured.

Khartskhaev's group No. 73 "Kechners": Elista - Zimovniki, Remontnoye - Cherished.
E.U. Ogirov No. 74 "Yusta":

Yashkul - Utta. Group S.A. Kolomeitseva: Yashkul - Utta. Bespalov's
group: Salsk - Yegorlykskaya (scheme No. 6). Group
of Kravchenko (younger): Salsk - Kotelnikovo (scheme No. 6).
Golubev's group: Elista - Zimovniki, Repair - Cherished. Group P.A. Lomakina:

Railway line on the section Kotelnikovo - Proletarsko. Group P.I. Ulushev No.: Trinity
ulus north of Elista,

Kolkuta - Trinity - Uvaga.

Group I.M. Kandaurova No.: Railway line on the section Kotelnikovo - Proletarskoye
(Scheme No. 6) Gershmyakov's group This is only 18
of more than 50 sabotage

and reconnaissance groups trained by Astrakhan Special School No. 005 and
abandoned behind enemy lines. Many of them went on missions and disappeared forever.
But the fate of two of them, - said Alexei Mikhailovich, - we were able to follow through a
survey of the population,

captured Gestapo documents and interrogations of prisoners. Here is what I learned from A.M. Dobroserdova.

"Sabotage and reconnaissance group S.A. Kolomeitsev, consisting of 16 fighters, of which 4 were Russians, 12 were Kalmyks Human.

Armament: machine guns - 5, rifles - 11, revolvers - 2, cartridges for all types of weapons - 4000, anti-personnel mines - 209, explosives (thol) - 38 kg. Food (dry rations) - for 15 days. The area of operation is Tavan-Gashun, an additional area is Khunduk Hagota [24] Upon arrival at the assigned area of — .

deployment, the group launched military operations. On the Yashkul-Utta road, she blew up several vehicles with property and enemy soldiers. At the airfield in Yash-Kul, five Messerschmitt-109 fighters were blown up and burned. After that, pursued by a squadron of Kalmyk legionnaires and mobile units of the Germans, for several days she fought fierce battles with her pursuers. The further fate of the group is unknown. "Sabotage and reconnaissance group P.N. Yakovlev" 57

"Pavel" consisting of 19 fighters, Russians - 11, Kalmyks - 8.

Armament: machine guns - 6, rifles - 12, revolvers - 2, cartridges of all types - 4954, anti-personnel mines - 198, explosives (thol) - 36 kg. Food (dry rations) - for 14 days.

The assigned area of action is the Troitsky ulus, located north of Elista. The task is to disrupt transportation along the Troitskoye-Ovata, Chile-Sarkha roads. This is on the way Elista-Stalingrad. The group "Pavel" came to a given area at the end of October. Along the way, she conducted active reconnaissance of the location of enemy military units, organized sabotage on the roads, and destroyed small detachments of Germans and their accomplices from the local population. On October 23, in the area of Khotun, Kolkata defeated the Romanian garrison. At the same time, 18 Romanian soldiers and officers were destroyed. After the group was interrupted, this connection complete uncertainty ensued"[25] . Already later, after the liberation of —

Kalmykia, through a survey of the population and on the basis of materials from the Gestapo, it was possible to find out that the group

"Pavel" died in mid-November in the vicinity of Elista. Betrayal played its dark role in this. Having found the group, the

Germans blocked it. The enemy forces outnumbered the group by dozens of times. There was a fierce battle that lasted more than a day. Many Germans were killed. They themselves admitted this. Surrounded by a dense ring of enemy soldiers, the fighters of the group fought to the last, as long as there was ammunition. The commander of the group was killed, the commissar died of severe wounds. The ranks of the fighters gradually thinned, and finally only the nurse of

the group, Tamara Khakhlynova, survived. The Germans stopped firing. They hoped to capture and interrogate her. Tamara had a rifle and ten rounds of ammunition. She pressed herself against the edge of the hole, which she managed to dig out with a finka in the frozen ground, and began to shoot, and she shot without a miss. The Germans hid in the thickets of sagebrush a hundred meters from her. Tamara noticed the machine gunner and killed him. The German who tried to replace him, she killed on the go. There are eight rounds left. As soon as one of the Germans moved, And the next shot immediately followed. Finally, she used up her last bullet. The fight lasted over

hours.

After a long pause, the Germans offered to surrender. There were no more cartridges. The girl rose from the ground, holding her rifle down. Then the officer in command of the battle got up. Tamara waited for him to come close, then smashed his head with a rifle butt. This was the eleventh enemy she had defeated since she single-handedly took on an entire enemy platoon. Immediately, several machine guns literally tore the body of a brave girl. When the Germans approached their victim, they were shocked that this little girl fought so bravely and skillfully with them. On the same day, the corpse of Tamara Khakhlynova was brought to Elista. The head of the city garrison, General Gopri, specially came to the police department to look at

the brave partisan. Three days after that, the naked body lay in the courtyard of the city police department, being ridiculed by the invaders. Then he was dragged through the streets of the city tied to an armored personnel carrier and abandoned somewhere.

A.M. Dobroserdov was present at the interrogation of one of the Gestapo officers in the city of Elista, and he spoke about the feat of Tamara Khakhlynova.

Later, after the Patriotic War, while working with documents in the Central Party Archive (see: TsPA IML. F. 69, op. 1, d. 45, ll. 68–69), I came across a certificate from representatives of the TsSHPD, documents 134 and 135 confirming this story. Tamara

Khakhlynova was a Kalmyk, born in 1917, a native of the city of Elista. Her father, Danila Beldzherovich Khakhlynov, a well-known land surveyor in Kalmykia, became a victim of Stalinist repressions in the second half of the 1930s. Tamara was a student at the Stalingrad Medical Institute. In September 1942, on the recommendation of the Kalmyk regional committee of the Komsomol, she was enrolled in special school No. 005. After accelerated training, she became part of the Pavel group, which soon went to the rear of the Germans.

I especially want to emphasize that at that difficult time for the country, supporters and opponents of Soviet power came together in a mortal battle. Both Russians and Cossacks (a special estate of the Russian nation), and Kalmyks fought against each other. I have already said above that the Patriotic War divided all the nations of the Soviet Union into friends and foes. According to the

memorandum of the Kalmyk regional party committee to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on the partisan movement and underground work in Kalmykia dated November 18, 1942 (document 128), 220 people were sent to the rear of the enemy on November 12, 1942, of which 124 were Kalmyk nationals. I specifically emphasize this fact, because in the recent past there was an opinion that all Kalmyks were traitors and that it was for this that they were repressed and exiled to

Siberia. From the memorandum of the Kalmyk Regional Party Committee to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, document No. 140, it is clear that from September 1942 to January 1943, the Astrakhan sabotage and reconnaissance school No. 005 prepared and sent 21 sabotage reconnaissance groups behind enemy lines, of which 13 groups (268 people) to the Kalmyk steppes, 8 groups (112 people) to the Stalingrad and Rostov regions, to the Dagestan Autonomous Repub

At about the same time, Major General Kruglyakov, a representative of the TsSHPD on the Volga, reported to his leadership about the deployment of 47 sabotage and reconnaissance groups behind enemy lines. Of these, only 27 returned. The fate of the rest remained unknown.

Ovid Gorchakov, digging through archival materials after the war, came across a report from the headquarters of the partisan movement of the Stalingrad Front to the TsSHPD about the deployment of 73 sabotage and reconnaissance groups behind enemy lines, of which 33 returned. He also established that the partisan headquarters, after being disbanded, sent their archives to Moscow .

Most of the sabotage and reconnaissance groups sent behind enemy lines have sunk into the water. As a rule, radio contact with them was maintained for three or four days and then cut off. Everyone understood what does this mean.

At the end of our meeting, A.M. Dobroserdov said that the headquarters of the TsShPD representative and our special school were relocating to the city of Salsk and asked me to remember the address where it would be located. Not to write down, but to remember, he said. And he also asked me to tell Batya that the radio call signs remain the same.

Returning to Priyutnoye, I told Batya about everything I had learned in the capital of the Autonomous Republic, and passed on the instructions of the headquarters of the representative of the Central School of Education and Science and the head of our special school. Then we talked about my work. "Dad" said that I had done a good job in Priyutnoye, now it's time to take care of the villages and khotuns of the ulus. For this, the executive committee of the ulus soviet allocates a cart to me, and he ("Batya") attaches two of our fighters from the

police to me, gives Fyodor Voronin our MG-34 machine gun with cartridges. He explained this by the fact that it was not safe to drive across the steppe. According to the counterintelligence headquarters of the 28th army and the state security workers of the republic, armed gangs of deserters and traitors who for some reason remained in the republic roam the steppe. They rob the population, destroy the workers of the Soviet government. "You, son," said "Dad", "you need to be extremely careful."

So my trips around the ulus began, and it was very large. In the southwest there was a Russian population, but Kalmyks lived in its main part. I traveled on these trips in a cart drawn by

two good horses. The driver-coachman was a Kalmyk from our detachment. Fedor and I were sitting in a cart, with a machine gun. We were always accompanied by two mounted policemen, also from our detachment. As a result, we were nicknamed the "flying detachment of the prosecutor's office."

We acted according to the previously worked out scheme. There were no adventures. Ran into gangster ambushes, as if we switched roles with them. They suddenly jumped out from behind some shelter and fired at us. But our raids took place in the daytime and we, as a rule, discovered them from afar, besides, they had no subversive means - no mines, no explosives.

We confiscated hidden grain, cattle, and found something else, including weapons. Wagons with grain were regularly placed at the disposal of the ulus leadership, and we handed over livestock (sheep, cows) to resurgent collective farms and state farms. During the survey, we found out some information for population local authorities state security. They have already formed and started to operate.

But once, in one of the Kalmyk khotuns, I arrested the entire party cell. Its members refused to voluntarily return the stolen state farm grain, but we found it. From this khotun I brought 16 boxes of grain to Priyutnoe. When the prosecutor told Batya that the arrested were

communists, I had a serious conversation, first with him, then at the bureau of the uluskom. I was persuaded to put the case on hold and point out that they handed over the grain voluntarily. I flatly refused, declaring that what kind of communists are they if they violate the laws of Soviet power? Only the prosecutor could cancel my decision. But V.N. Artamonov supported me. I naively asked the bureau of the uluskom: "Can communists break the law? Isn't the law the same for everyone? The question was closed. But from that day on, my relationship with Batya became tense.

Chapter

10 On a new mission

February 1943 was drawing to a close. Once, a group of fighters from the "Batya" detachment called to his place in Uluskom. By this time he was already the second secretary of the uluskom. The first was a Kalmyk, I don't remember exactly his last name, it seems Batalov, who had just returned from evacuation. But "Batya" was our commander and therefore for us - the first person in the

ulus. He announced that an instruction had been received from the headquarters of the TsSHPD representative to form a sabotage reconnaissance group on the basis of our detachment to send it to the Kuban. We are gathered here by order of the head of special school No. 005 A.M. Dobroserdova. Then he read out the order, from which it followed that senior sergeant Vladimir Pyatnitsky was appointed commander of the group, Nikolai Aleksashin was appointed his deputy, Gennady Yakovlev was a radio operator, Olga Matuzko was a nurse, and so on, a total of 13 people. Each has its own weapon. Get ammunition and equipment in Salsk, where it is now located special

school. "Pyatnitsky knows the address. Move to Salsk on your own. You will learn the route from the commander. Get food from Dzyuba. Departure the day after tomorrow at dawn. Not a word about our conversation. When and who needs what, they will find out later.

On the third day at dawn, our group left the village of Priyutnoye. The whole detachment accompanied us to the outskirts. At parting, "Dad" came up to me, hugged me and said: "You are stubborn, son, but fair, take care of the guys." We again went into the unknown. There was no direct road to Salsk from Priyutnoye, but we went straight ahead. So it was much shorter. We crossed the Manych, then there was the Russian population, the Cossacks. We walked slowly, 20 kilometers a day. There were no special adventures. The Cossack women, left without husbands, fed us and gratified us as best they could. So we weren't in a big hurry. In the tenth of March, the group entered Salsk. Armed people, dressed out of uniform, aroused close curiosity not only among residents, but also among local workers.

commandant's office. In the center of the city we were met by a reinforced commandant's outfit. After much hard squabbling, he finally took us to the specified address. The commandant's service did not know about the existence on their territory of the headquarters of the representative of the TsSHPD and our sabotage and reconnaissance school. And we weren't

allowed to tell anyone about it. In the building where we arrived, they found only one person. He said that at the beginning of March 1943 our special school was liquidated, and the representatives of the Central School of Action were recalled to Moscow. The officer who met us here was specially left to meet our and other groups sent to this address for further instructions. It turns out that our group was not the only one. In other regions of Kalmykia, from the surviving groups, also engaged in the restoration of Soviet power in the areas of their former activity, they formed new sabotage reconnaissance groups to be thrown behind enemy lines in the mountainous regions of the Kuban. But at that time

the situation in the southern direction of the front changed sharply in our direction. As early as the beginning of January 1943, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command began counterattacks from the Southern Front and the Black Sea Group of Forces to surround the 1st Panzer Army of Colonel General Ewald von Kleist. The Red Army managed to break through the defenses. the enemy along the

Tikhoretsk-Rostov-on-Don line and continue the attack on Kharkov. In the first half of February, the Red Army liberated Rostov-on-Don, cutting off the Kleist Caucasian group from its troops. She began a retreat to the Taman Peninsula with the task of crossing the Kerch Strait to the Crimea. It was just the area where the headquarters planned to throw our group. But the concentration of enemy troops in this area was so significant that the deployment of sabotage and reconnaissance groups did not make sense. Therefore, we were ordered to go to the nearest military enlistment office for an official return to the ranks of the Red Army. This is either in Rostov-on-Don, or in Kamyshin. The latter was closer and we, having consulted with each other, decided to move there. We were given a direction and characteristics, apparently prepared in advance

for five days. And we, having spent the night in the building of a special school,

moved to Kamyshin. Thus ended the epic of our sabotage activities in the rear enemy. * * *

We got to Kamyshin in a few days, where by passing transport, where on foot. On the way we passed Stalingrad. We knew it was destroyed. But when they saw it with their own eyes, they were shocked by the sight of solid ruins, among which stood one half-broken house. Later it was called "Pavlov's House", and everyone learned its history.

What else we remember is the land on which we walked. When you bend down and take a handful of it, you see only fragments instead of earth in your hand. All the land in the city was covered with a layer of battle iron. How many lives were lost behind this?

We went through the whole city along a beaten path, checked by sappers. It was like walking through a memorial cemetery. The mood was terrible.

When we arrived in Kamyshin, we immediately stumbled upon a commandant's patrol. He met us with rifles at the ready. We also pointed our machine guns in their direction. So they stood for some time in heavy tension. Then I turned to the elder, the patrol commander - the captain, calling him a comrade. We explained ourselves without taking our weapons away from each other.

I asked where the city's military registration and enlistment office was and asked him to take us there, because we were in the city for the first time and also in order to avoid subsequent misunderstandings with the commandant's service. The commandant's detachment escorted us to the military registration and enlistment office. The captain saluted, saying goodbye to us, we entered the draft board. His workers looked at us, some with fear, some with curiosity. When I, having opened the door of the military commissar, went into his office, the colonel was drinking something from a glass and, out of surprise, dropped it on the papers lying in front of him. He looked fearfully at the barrel of my machine gun pointed at him. I forgot,

entering the recruiting office, to hang it in a marching way. He came to his senses only when I reported to him that the sabotage and reconnaissance group led by me in the amount of 13 people, according to the order of the TsSHPD, arrived

order. Then he wiped the sweat off his face with the sleeve of his tunic, opened the drawer, took out a bottle of vodka, two glasses, and having filled them, said:

“Well, you scared me, senior sergeant. Let's have a drink. It's good that you arrived on time. Now a marching squadron is being formed in the city to replenish the 12th Guards Cossack Division. Here is your group and will go to replenish the Cossack army. Let's drink to that,” said the Colonel, and we clinked glasses. I handed him a package with a referral and documents from the TsSHGTD, asked who to hand over weapons and ammunition to. He called his subordinates, everything was decided instantly. We handed over our weapons to the representatives of the commandant's office, who arrived at the colonel's call. I demanded a receipt for the surrendered property and insisted that the military commissar certify it with his signature and seal, warning that he must send this note to the TsSHPD. Then we were fed.

The colonel summoned a representative of the 12th Cossack division, who had arrived specifically for reinforcements, and handed us over to him along with our documents. Two days later, we went by rail in wagons to a new duty station. So fate decreed that we be Don Cossacks. But that is another story

Vladimir Iosifovich Pyatnitsky

Vladimir Pyatnitsky is the youngest son of the world famous revolutionary Joseph (Osip) Pyatnitsky (1882-1938), one of the founders of the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International (Comintern).

His father was one of the leaders of the Moscow armed uprising in October 1917, then the organizer and head of the railway workers' trade union, the secretary of the Moscow Committee of the RSDLP (b). Since March 1921, on the instructions of V.I. Lenin, he took over all the organizational and secret work of the world communist movement, becoming one of the leaders of the Comintern.

In 1937, at the June Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, he openly opposed the repressive policies pursued by Stalin and demanded greater control of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of

Bolsheviks over the activities of the NKVD, for which he was arrested and later shot. At the end of 1937, the entire Pyatnitsky family was arrested. Father and eldest son, tenth grader - Igor in 1937, wife and Vladimir himself, a sixth grade student - in 1938. He was then only 13 years old. For several months, Vladimir was kept in the children's reception center of the NKVD in the St. Danilov Monastery. The notorious security agencies did not know what to do with him, because the criminal code of the Land of Soviets provided for criminal liability upon reaching the age of 14, and Vladimir was only 13.

The exit has been found. The authoritative medical commission of this department established that Vladimir's metrics were allegedly incorrect, that the subject under examination was at least 14 years old, and, therefore, he was arrested correctly. The metric was torn, and the documents "corrected" it. Thus, Vladimir has

matured for a whole year. But at this time, fortunately for him, the leadership of the security agencies changed. N. Yezhov was arrested. He was replaced by L. Beria. The cleansing of places of detention began, and Vladimir was sent to the Kropotkinskaya (Kuban) colony of juvenile delinquents, fr

he soon ran away, wandered around the Cossack villages, but was detained in Armavir and sent to an orphanage in the village of Voznesenskaya. In the orphanage, he created a Komsomol organization and, together with the director of the orphanage V. Safronov, a student of A.P. Makarenko, introduced the teachings of Anton Pavlovich Makarenko in his orphanage,

becoming chairman of the council of commanders. In the summer of 1942, when the Germans occupied Rostov-on-Don, and Kleist's tank army broke through to the Kuban and Stavropol, Vladimir joined the fighter detachment of the Labinsky district, and, together with the district column, retreated with battles to Makhachkala. There he was sent to the 28th reserve brigade, where he

received the military specialty of a machine gunner. And here one of the paradoxes of fate occurred. Vladimir's older brother, Igor, was accused of allegedly creating a youth terrorist group "Children for Fathers" at his school, and received ten years in the camps for this fictitious crime. And his younger brother in September 1942 was sent to study at the secret sabotage and reconnaissance special school No. 005 of the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement

(TSSHPD). After completing a training course there, in November 1942, as part of the sabotage and reconnaissance detachment No. 55 "Avenger", he was abandoned on the territory of the Kalmyk Republic occupied by the Germans (the left flank of the Stalingrad Front). After the defeat of the army of Field Marshal von Paulus near Stalingrad, Vladimir participated in the restoration of Soviet power in the territory of the Priyutinsky district of the Kalmyk Republic, being in the reserve of the southern department of the Central School of Police and Working as an assistant to the

prosecutor of the Priyutinsky district. Since May 1943, Vladimir was again in the ranks of the army in the field. As part of the 5th Guards Corps, he fought his way from Rostov-on-Don to the Austrian Alps, being the commander of the combined reconnaissance group of the division, the communications officer of the 12th Guards Cossack division, and after the war the commander of the banner platoon of the division. Then he served as a Komsomol

organizer of the military plant No. 50 of the MVS of the North Caucasian Military District. For participation in the Great Patriotic War, he was awarded

Medal "For Courage"

After demobilization from the army in 1948, Vladimir tried to return to Moscow at his place of birth, but when he tried to obtain a passport, he was expelled from the capital as "the son of an enemy of the people." After leaving for Leningrad, he went to work at the Baltic Shipyard, where he worked as a ship assembler, electric welder, and at the same time was the Komsomol organizer of the largest hull

shop at the plant. During the "Leningrad case" fabricated by the authorities in 1949, Vladimir was twice tried to be expelled from the party, but the shop workers defended him, not supporting the intentions of the factory party committee. But he was still fired from the factory as unreliable. He had to work odd jobs.

In 1950, Vladimir got married. He became the father of two sons, one of whom died in 1984.

After the rehabilitation of his parents and older brother in 1956, Vladimir graduated from the Leningrad Evening Shipbuilding College in a year and a half, and then graduated from the Leningrad Shipbuilding Institute in two and a half years. After that, he worked in various shipbuilding enterprises, then in the Leningrad Economic Council, supervising military shipbuilding. After the liquidation of the economic councils, he worked at the facilities of the Leningrad industry. The last positions are the director of the plant and the head of production of a large association.

During the years of perestroika, Vladimir Iosifovich became one of the founders of the Leningrad branch of the Memorial society, the Association of Victims of Political Repressions, and a number of charitable organizations. He is the chairman of the public council of the city center for veterans and the elderly "Nadezhda", the chairman of the publishing council of the newspaper "Vestnik Veteran". Touching briefly on the

biography of Vladimir Iosifovich, it is necessary to say a few words about his grandiose literary works (not by the number of printed sheets, but by the fact that for the first time in Russian historical literature he made a serious attempt to analyze such a large and controversial phenomenon as the Communist International - the world communist party). He has published three books.

"Golgotha" is his mother's diary, which shows the ordeal of a woman who could not understand what really happened in the country. She believed in her husband, a professional revolutionary, and his friends and associates, who were arrested as "enemies of the people." She believed in official propaganda and rushed about in search of the truth. This book was published in the USA and France and became a bestseller. According to Western politicians, it very clearly reflects the Soviet reality of the late 1930s.

The second, *The Conspiracy Against Stalin*, was published by the Sovremennik publishing house in 1997; the third, *Osip Pyatnitsky and the Comintern on the Scales of History*, was published in July 2004. Taken together, they show the emergence of Osip Pyatnitsky, a Leninist revolutionary, as one of the leaders of the international communist movement. They also talk about his disagreement with Stalin's policy and, finally, about his speech at the June plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks in 1937 against the destruction of the best people of the country, against Stalin's proposal to grant Yezhov emergency powers to fight the counter-revolution, allegedly permeating the whole of society, against the Stalinist policy of genocide of his people, and about his death.

I know Vladimir Iosifovich Pyatnitsky as a principled and very reliable person who, having once absorbed certain convictions, never betrayed them and under all circumstances always remained himself.

The editors of the encyclopedia "The Best People of Russia" in its third edition placed Vladimir Iosifovich Pyatnitsky in the section "Glorious Sons of the Motherland".

Retired Lieutenant General V.P. Cheremnykh

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Pyatnitsky Vladimir Iosifovich Intelligence
School No. 005

Edition: Pyatnitsky V. I., Starinov I. G. Intelligence School No. 005 / V. I. Pyatnitsky;
History of the partisan movement / I. G. Starinov. — M.: AST; Mn.: Harvest, 2005.

Pyatnitsky V.I. Intelligence school No. 005 in the book: Pyatnitsky V. I., Starinov I. G. Intelligence school No. 005 / V. I. Pyatnitsky; History of the partisan movement / I. G. Starinov. - M.: LLC "Publishing House AST"; Minsk: Harvest, 2005. - 304 s - (Commandos).

notes

Notes

1

The author of the book V.I. Pyatnitsky, as well as the author of a course of lectures on the partisan movement in the USSR I.G. Starinov (see Appendix 2), greatly exaggerate the achievements of the Soviet partisans. For more details, see the book by V.I. Boyarsky "Partisans and the Army: The History of Lost Opportunities", published by the Harvest Publishing House in 2001 - Note. ed.

2

PA IPP at the CPB. Translation Fund. Case 61. L. 269–270.

3

There.

4

See History of the Second World War, Volume 5, p. 290.

5

According to the data of the German communist historian W. Künrich from the former GDR, based on the documents of “archives, during the entire war the Germans and their allies lost” about 550 thousand military personnel in their rear in the occupied territory of the USSR, i.e. three times less. The same applies to the numbers of destroyed weapons, equipment and property. At the same time, more than half of these casualties are accounted for by former Soviet citizens who served in the auxiliary units of the Wehrmacht, in the Eastern Legions, in security battalions (Schutzmannschaften), and in the police. — Approx. e

6

Here the author is wrong. The 16th SS division was called "Reichsführer SS". It was formed only in July-October 1943 in Corsica and northern Italy; it did not participate in battles on the Eastern Front. None of the 38 divisions of the SS troops bore the name "Brown Bear". It is possible that we are talking about the 16th motorized rifle division of the Wehrmacht, which had no name. — Approx. ed.

Dobroserdov A.M. was born in the village of Bolkhunakh, Astrakhan province, in 1905. In 1919, he joined the Komsomol. During the Civil War, being a Komsomol leader, he established Soviet power in Kalmykia and the Astrakhan province. As a 15-year-old boy, he either chased gangster formations across the steppe, or he himself hid in it from the White Kalmyks and White Cossacks. Later, on the instructions of the party, he rebuilt life in the Kalmyk steppes, took an active part in the construction of the capital of the Republic of Elista. He joined the party in 1926. On the

instructions of the party cell, he organized Komsomol work. Then he worked in the Bogatsekhuprovsky uluskom of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League. In 1930-32. was the head of the organizational instructor department, deputy secretary of the Kalmyk district committee of the Komsomol. In 1932, he was elected first secretary of the Elista city committee of the CPSU (b). Since 1938 he was in the military defense mass work. In September 1942, by decision of the Kalmyk Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the TsShPD was recommended to lead the sabotage and reconnaissance school being created. — Ap

See: OPA Calm. ASSR, f. 1, op. 44, p. 23, ll. 87-102.

9

OPA KASSR, f. 1, op. 44, p. 23, ll. 87-102 (Document No. 140).

10

CPA IML, f. 69, op. 1, d. 45, ll. 68–70 (Documents Nos. 132, 134, 136).

eleven

CPA IML, f. 69, op. 1, file 33, sheet 4 (copy).

12

Here and above, I use the book of I.G. Starinov "Notes of a Saboteur" and his stories during our meetings with him after the end of the war in Moscow.

13

This is only a legend, not confirmed either by documents or memoirs. — Approx. ed.

14

See: CPL IML. F. 69, op. 1, d. 45, ll. 101–103 (document no. 136);
OPA Cal. ASSR. F. 1, op. 44, p. 23, ll. 87-102 (Document No. 140).

15

CPA IML. F. 69, op. 1, d. 33, l. 36 (Document No. 131).

16

OPA Cal. ASSR. F. 1, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 92–94 (document no. 130).

CPA IML. F. 69, op. 1, d. 45, ll. 101–103 (document no. 136).

18

Tukhachevsky Mikhail Nikolaevich (1893-1937) - hero of the Civil War, Marshal of the USSR, military theorist, 1st deputy. People's Commissar of Defense, made a major contribution to the building of the Red Army and strengthening the defense

power of the USSR. Gai Gaia Dmitrievich (1887-1937) - hero of the Civil War, during the Soviet-Polish war (1920) commanded the 3rd cavalry corps, commander, in the last years of his life he was in military pedagogical and scientific work.

Kork August Ivanovich (1887-1937) - hero of the Civil War, commander of the 2nd rank, head of the military academy. Frunze.

Berzin (Berzin) Yan Karlovich, aka Pavel Ivanovich, aka "The Old Man" and "Grishin" (1889-1938) - army commissar of the 2nd rank, head of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army General Staff.

Trilisser Meer Abramovich (1883-1940) - an old Bolshevik, head of the military-political intelligence (Foreign Department) of the OGPU.

19

CPA IML. F. 69, op. 1, d. 33, l. 36.

20

According to information from the diary of Sturmbannfuehrer (Major) Peter Neumann, commander of the motorized rifle company of the Nordland regiment of the Viking division, a witness and participant in the events described. The diary was published in Germany and the USA under the title "Black March - Personal Memories of an SS". Declared her missing. The fighters of this group, at the cost of their lives, delayed the advance of the tank armada of General Hoth and prevented its breakthrough to the encircled Stalingrad.

21

CPA IML. F. 69, op. 1, d. 45, l. 69.

22

CGTA IML. F. 69, he. 1, d. 45, l. 69.

23

See: TsPA IML. F. 69, op. 45.

24

From the documents of the special school No. 005.

25

Information from representatives of the TsSHPD about the partisan detachment of P.N. Yakovlev of December 1942 (document No. 134).